



The Beaver

SPRING
1970





In this year of 1970, the 300th anniversary of the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay, *The Beaver*, a stripling of fifty years, will pay tribute to the Company which has begotten and sustained it. Policy has been not to stress the Company itself in this Magazine of the North, but an exception may justifiably be made on so rare an occasion as a tercentenary.

Throughout the year there will be special articles in which the Honourable Company will feature and the issue for autumn will be entirely devoted to a series of outstanding events that affected the history of the Company, terminating in 1870 with the Deed of Surrender and the official transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada.

In this spring issue, new and old aspects of 'The Bay' will be blended, together with a salute to Manitoba on the 100th anniversary of its creation as a province. In the following issues there will be further delving into the past of the organization which, in keeping with the spirit of its founders, is now 'three hundred years bold'.



The Beaver

MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH

Editor: *Malvina Bolus*

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1970



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The 1870 Outfit at Red River

BY W. L. MORTON

Distinguished Canadian historian who has done much to promote interest in the country's past, now professor of history at Trent University, Professor Morton has written many books and has given particular attention to his native province of Manitoba.

THE SUMMER OF 1870 was a season of anxious question for everyone concerned with Red River Settlement. For Riel and his supporters there was the question, what terms will Canada accept and, above all, will it grant an amnesty? For most people there was the question, when will peace be assured again? For the Canadian government, can we assert our authority in the Northwest before the Americans of Minnesota or the Plains Indians move? For Wolseley and his men on the portages between Superior and Lake Winnipeg, how many days more to Fort Garry and what shall we find there? And for Donald A. Smith and Sir Stafford Northcote of the Hudson's Bay Company there was the question, can we get the outfit of 1870 to the posts and the furs out to York?

There were, of course, to be terms with Red River, but no amnesty. The Queen's peace was re-established. The

goods were got in and the furs out. But there was something unexpected too, something not asked until the Third Bill of Rights in March 1870. That was the creation of a province. It was not even then the province asked for in the Bill of Rights, one to include all the Northwest to the Rockies, but a very little one for the Red River Settlement and its offshoots and no more. It was nevertheless a strange addition to the outfit of 1870.

Strange, perhaps, in the press of that dramatic summer, yet not wholly strange to the historian's hindsight. There had been a community with an economic function on Red River for half a century. It was to be expected that fact should in some way be recognized when the Northwest was incorporated into the new Dominion of Canada. That the recognition should have taken the form of full blown provincehood was no doubt surprising, yet not wholly so. Red River had been made the focus of North-



The artist W. Frank Lynn came to Red River in 1870; this small oil painting is marked simply Fort Garry, Winnipeg.



A recent painting of the Forks of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers as the scene might have been in 1867 looking east to St Boniface.

western affairs for fifty years by the Hudson's Bay Company and the people of Red River. If to make Red River a province was to anticipate the future by fifteen to twenty years, not to have given it some political status would have been an error, an error to some degree committed in the exceedingly offhand way in which the Dominion government handled the transfer of Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company to the Dominion.

The root of the settlement on Red River is to be found in the need to supply provisions to the canoe brigades of the fur trade. Furs were traded in the posts at the Forks of the Red and the Assiniboine, of course, but from the earliest years, say, the building of the North West Company's Fort Gibraltar in 1810, the chief concern was to collect and transmit food to the canoe brigades on the Winnipeg River and to the northern posts dependent on hunting and fishing. Indeed as early as 1736 La Vérendrye found dried meat waiting for him by arrangement at the Forks. That is, the function of the Red and the Assiniboine was an unmistakable landmark in the unmarked plain of the great valley, and a centre to which the 'plains provisions,' the dried meat and pemmican from the buffalo herds, might be taken by the Red to Lake Winnipeg.

A depot and distributing point Red River became almost at once, however; the reasons were that the Red River valley nearby was too swampy to be good buffalo country, and the herds were soon shrinking to the westward. Other provision posts quietly grew up along the Assiniboine, the forts near the Souris mouth and Brandon House, and the posts on the Qu'Appelle. These too traded furs, but their primary purpose was to collect pemmican from the plains Indians and the Métis hunters. Each spring the bags of pemmican and bundles of dried meat were run down the spring freshets of the Qu'Appelle and Saskatchewan in rough scows of new sawn lumber. These were burnt for their nails at the mouth of the Winnipeg, and the scarce iron carried back up river to build another flotilla. The pemmican and meat were picked up by the canoe men at Fort Alexander, which had existed on a diet of wild rice and fish from Fort Frances on the Rainy river, and were used to fuel the brigades to the Saskatchewan until the edge of the buffalo plains was reached again where Fort Carlton was to stand. Thus the plains, otherwise of little use to the fur trader, fed the fur traffic of the northern forests.

It is apparent from any map that the Forks of the Red was the central point of this supply to the fur trade route.

It was not itself a contributor to the supply but the strategic key to the timely provisions from the plains reaching the canoes in early summer. It is also apparent that anyone not a canoeman would seize any opportunity to add to the staple food of buffalo meat, and so we early hear of potatoes being cultivated at Red River, not to supply the canoe route, but for the local posts. Indeed, the younger Henry had gardened vigorously at Pembina from the beginning of the century, as the Saulteaux had grown corn on Garden Island in the Lake of the Woods and at Netley Creek near the mouth of the Red. Farming and horticulture followed the provisions trade of the plains, and furnished a basis of settlement, if not an additional supply to the canoe brigades.

It was knowledge of the practicality of agriculture in Red River that, with his desire to aid the emigration from the Highlands of Scotland and to people British land with British stock, led Lord Selkirk to undertake the founding of the Red River Settlement in the colony of the Assiniboia which he acquired as a nominal 'purchase' from the Hudson's Bay Company in 1811. As an isolated settlement, it was at least fifty years ahead of any great possibility of success. But of course it was not wholly isolated, because Selkirk and his brother-in-law Andrew Colville hoped, against the wishes and better judgement of old hands in the Hudson's Bay Company, to make their settlement a working part of the fur trade of the Company. It was to be at once a source of supply of provisions and labour, and a place of retirement for employees of the Company. It was meant indeed to give the company a base in Rupert's Land such as York Factory, Churchill, and Rupert's House had never furnished on the sullen coasts of Hudson Bay.

It is apparent now, it must surely have been apparent then, if it had been possible to sort out the tangle of motives, fears, and passions that drove on the founders of Red River and their opponents, that the colony could have no economic function except to feed the colonists and the fur traders. Certainly no other market was to be found in fifty years, and the growth of Red River Settlement was to be limited by the needs of its own population for food and what the Hudson's Bay Company bought to provision its posts. And even in that, what the farmers produced was limited by what the buffalo hunters brought in from the plains, as Alexander Ross pointed out. Whatever the hunters offered for sale it was necessary for the Company to buy, at traditional prices, lest they riot.

The Red River colony thus carried on, and did better, the old task of providing food from the prairies for the boatmen of the northern rivers and to some degree the posts of the northern forests. It ended the questioning, for the time being, at least, of the title of the Hudson's Bay Company to the land of Rupert's Land. Land titles in the colony were given with assurance on the right of the Company as lords of the soil, and land titles along the Red and Assiniboine to this day rest on Hudson's Bay grants. It became a recruiting place for labour, and even for emigrants to the Columbia, and a place of settlement and education for retired officers and servants, particularly those made superfluous by the Union of the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies in 1821, and for their families. Especially did it become a place of winter residence, a focus of the semi-nomadic life, of religious worship, of church marriage, of education, for the freemen of the North West Company, the Métis. Even to



An impression of 'Manitobah' by W. G. R. Hind who travelled in the Red River country in the 1860s.



Paul Kane joined a band of some 200 Métis hunters on the plains beyond Fort Garry before painting them running buffalo.

the Indians it became a place of trade, of curiosity, of casual resort, the scene of traditional dog feasts, even the centre of Christian worship for some.

Red River, in short, became a community of settled and civilized life in a wilderness unbroken by axe or plough from Sault Ste Marie to the Columbia, sparsely dotted at most with a few permanent trading posts, Fort Frances, Fort Carlton, Fort Edmonton, Fort Vancouver (in present-day Washington State), where also gardens were tended, fields fenced, books read. But in none by so many people as in Red River. And in each only the chief factor governed. The Red River colony, however, had always had its own governor and he his councillors. And in 1836, when the Company resumed the Selkirk grant of Assiniboia, it re-organized and strengthened the government and gave it a jurisdiction extending for fifty miles in all directions from Fort Garry. This was a rather marine-like definition of boundaries, but quite fitting in a land where natural boundaries were slight and meant little. The result was the District of Assiniboia, with governor, council (appointed by the Company but including representatives of all elements in the polyglot settlement) and even magistrates and police. The latter were not very efficient, however, because they shrank from arresting their own kind, and would have provoked a riot if they had arrested another kind of settler than themselves.

Fortunately Red River was, rather surprisingly, a very peaceful place. But, so equipped, it was not only a settlement of immigrant Scots, retired fur traders, and discharged freemen; it was very definitely an organized

government, making laws, establishing courts in which the common law of England was judiciously mixed with common sense, and even levying taxes though with careful regard to what the inhabitants would pay if they could not evade. The government was a creation of the Company; it was not democratic in any formal way, but rather ineffectually paternalistic. It was, however, a legally constituted government, and, subject to the wild ways of the Métis if offended, or of incoming Canadians if not restrained, it did govern, jailing drunks, hanging one murderer (an Indian) and finally fining Thomas Scott from Canada for disorderly behaviour. His offence was that of assaulting his employer, John Snow of the Canadian work party on the Dawson road, by holding him head down over the flooding Seine for withholding his wages for the days Scott and his fellows had been on strike. Assiniboia was the legal government of Red River, with some, if not all, of a government's powers and troubles.

It was, admittedly, a government subject to the threat of a demonstration by the Métis. Those picturesque Indian-French people had a life and government of their own in the summer buffalo hunt and the captain and council of the hunt, both of the latter popularly elected. That life was fiercely independent, based wholly on their skill in plainscraft and marksmanship. Nothing protected the Métis against the Sioux except their own courage and tactics. The former was great, the latter skilful, as the victory of a small party of Métis over a Sioux war party in July 1851 demonstrated in the battle of the Grand



BRUCE JOHNSON FOR H.B.C.

With Louis Riel at Fort Garry in January 1870, Donald A. Smith explains his commission from the Canadian government to 'enquire into the causes of discontent and dissatisfaction' regarding the proposed union with Canada. (A recent painting.)

Couteau. Back at St Boniface and St Francois-Xavier they settled down amiably enough under the tuition of their priests and the admonitions of their magistrates of the District of Assiniboia. If, however, they turned out mounted with their arms, they were the only organized force in the settlement, except when British troops were stationed there from 1846 to 1848, and 1858 to 1861.

They were, nevertheless, an integral part of the colony and its government, and became steadily more so as it became apparent after 1857 that the whole of the old order, the Company, the District of Assiniboia, and the Métis, were to be overwhelmed in the advance of the Canadian frontier jumping over the thousand miles of wilderness from Collingwood on Georgian Bay to Red River. That coming together of the Métis and the government of the colony was to take place in very round about way, as things tended to do in Red River, or as indeed they do in any free community.

What had driven the Métis—and indeed the younger generation of the British half breeds—and the Company apart was the issue of 'free trade' in furs. In 1844 Norman Kittson, a fur trader from St Paul came to Pembina just below the boundary line, and began to form business connections in Red River—indeed he was to marry the daughter of a leading French settler of St Boniface. But the sum of his activities was to induce Indians and Métis hunters to take their fur catches to him at Pembina rather than the posts of the Hudson's Bay Company. The Company, with its Charter and its Parliamentary Licence, had a monopoly of trade in Rupert's Land and the far north and west. It had allowed the petty traders

of Red River, like Andrew McDermot, to buy the furs, but on the tacit understanding they would trade them to the Company. Sale over the line, or the export of furs by the traders, was a different matter, and the Company tried to preserve its monopoly.

The upshot was the trial in May 1849, before the General Court of Assiniboia, of William Sayer and four others charged with illicit trading in furs. The Métis, not yet gone to the hunt as the grass was not grown, collected for mass on Ascension Day and demonstrated in arms. They were led in this by the Rev. Antoine Belcourt of Pembina and the elder Louis Riel of St Boniface. The result was that, although Sayer was found guilty of trading in furs, the recommendation of the court to mercy was interpreted as an acquittal, and the Métis dispersed shouting '*Le commerce est libre*'—trade is free! Free it was, thereafter, and the Company had to fight the independent fur traders and Kittson by offering higher prices and rousing its large and experienced organization.

What is too little noted, however, is that the demand for free trade was at once followed by a demand for new and greater representations of the Métis on the Council of Assiniboia. (The trial had discredited their former representative, the famous Cuthbert Grant, Warden of the Plains of Red River.) The demand was granted, not at once, and then rather grudgingly, but granted it was, thus opening the way for an incorporation of the Métis into the Council and the Settlement to a degree that had not occurred before 1849.

By 1857 a tolerable symbiosis of Métis hunter and settler farmer, of Company and the Settlement as a

whole, had come into being. That partnership rested on the tolerated free trade, for the most part absorbed by the Company, and on a genuine self-government under a still appointed, but fully representative Council of Assiniboia. The political and legal organs of Red River Society pretty well reflected the character of the Red River community, and gave it, shabby and run down though it was, a definite political being. It was a political micro-organism and to be recognized as such.

The peace of the settlement was ruffled, however, with the coming of the Canadians in the exploring expeditions of 1857 and 1858. Some relations with Canada had continued since 1821, missionary and educational, but there had been neither economic nor political ties. Now the government of Canada had sent exploring parties to find out how communications might be opened, and whether the country was suited for agricultural settlement. This business-like, and unheralded, invasion broke the Arcadian calm of Red River. Some settlers welcomed it, hard-headed Scots like Donald Gunn. But most saw that it meant change, a change that would sweep away the fur trade and the buffalo hunt, and which offered little place for trader or hunter.

After two years the Canadian explorers withdrew, but some Canadian traders and adventurers remained, to form a 'Canada' party, to assail the title of the Hudson's Bay Company to the land and to govern, and to agitate for union with Canada. An American party also formed, made up of traders and saloon keepers from St Paul, and deserters from the army during the Civil War, but the Americans were much more discreet than the 'Canadas'. They could see that resentment of the brashness of the Canadians could only help them in so far as they had any marked desire to have the Northwest fall to the United States. It is interesting to note that these adventurers from Canada and the States were, with Andrew McDer-

mot, the real founders of the little free trade village of Winnipeg on the west bank of the Red just north of the Hudson's Bay Company's reserved land.

The effect was to bring the Company and the Métis into closer alliance, as each was bound up with the old order. Most of the settlement was with them in sentiment, except for the Scots Presbyterians and, in a restrained way, the Anglican clergy who trusted the Imperial government to restrain the frontier zeal of the Canadian traders and land speculators.

That government did indeed give some thought to remote Red River. The Colonial Secretary from 1859 to 1864, the Duke of Newcastle, suggested it might be made a Crown Colony. But it hardly seemed big enough to support even the simplest colonial government. The British government would have been glad enough to let Canada take over its unrewarding responsibilities in a part of the globe in which it had only the most tenuous interest. But Canada had its own difficulties to deal with, and simply adding the Northwest would only complicate them by vastly increasing Upper over Lower Canada. And there were the undoubted, but undefined, rights of the Hudson's Bay Company to be settled before any transfer of the Northwest to Canada could take place.

Confederation settled the difficulties in Canada and basic agreement was formulated on the rights of the Company. The new Dominion was to acquire the Northwest and compensate the Company for the surrender of its rights. But then what was perhaps no more than a comedy of errors began, which eventually led to the taking up of arms and the killing of two men. That was the Red River Rebellion, led by Louis Riel. It was no rebellion, technically speaking, but resistance enforced by the guns of the buffalo hunt to the transfer of the Northwest to Canada without the people of Red River having some voice in the matter. The 'some voice' now proved to be the demand that they have, as a province in the Dominion, the self-government they already had under the Council of Assiniboia; the same, but increased and made formal.

Their delegates, the way having been prepared by the patience of the Company and the diplomacy of Donald A. Smith, won this from Canada. The province was indeed to be not the whole Northwest east of the Rockies, but the original Manitoba, the 'postage stamp province'. This was in population only Red River with Portage la Prairie and St Laurent added, and in territory only somewhat more than the old circular District of Assiniboia made square. But it was still the social and political community it had been. The old regime of the fur trade and the Hudson's Bay Company, with its supply and retirement colony of Red River, had led to the creation, at the impetuous will of Riel, of the Province of Manitoba.

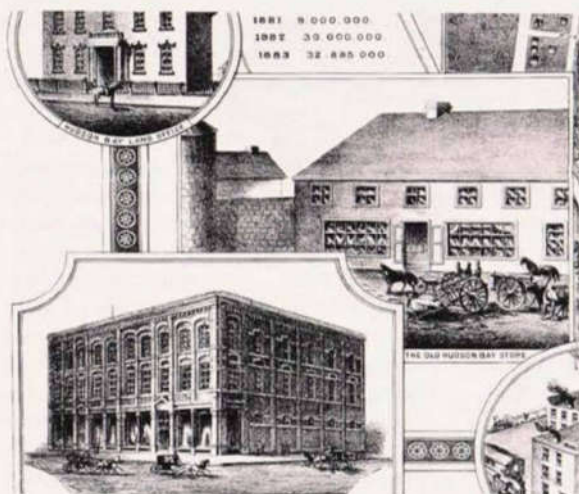
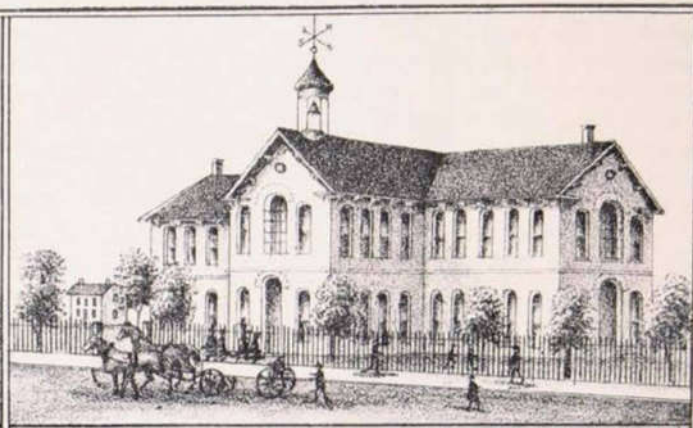
That event of one hundred years ago was a sudden and dramatic historical transformation. Because of its abruptness, and its drama, the historian is tempted to exaggerate the completeness of the change. The old



Riel with some of his Council who stipulated that their territory should enter confederation only as a province.



Church and school, drawn in the '80s, were important aspects of Winnipeg life. In 1881 the H B C Main Street store replaced the old store that had stood in the wall of Fort Garry.



order of the fur trade was to disappear in the new order of agriculture. That was true enough, but it is more historical, perhaps, to note rather that the fur trade went on, as did the Hudson's Bay Company, and the new agricultural settlement was a development from, as well as an expansion and improvement of, the farming practised in Red River. The real transition took some time; indeed in a sense is not ended yet, since some elements of the old—to give a visible example, the river lot surveys along the Red and Assiniboia—were incorporated into the new.

Many of the old pursuits and the old ways continued, and it is important to a sense of the continuity of history in a centennial year to remember them. The fur trade did not end abruptly. For a decade after 1870 the fur traders, many of them new Canadians and British traders and firms, busily bought furs, until the skill, patience, and capital of the Company led them to seek profit rather in supplying the new settlers. The Company itself con-

tinued in the fur trade, pushing its posts farther northward, but remaining in competition along the southern edge of the forest county, meeting successive competitors with the same quiet and resolute competition which the coming of 'free trade' had prepared it to do. It of course still drew on the plains for provisions, but these now were not pemmican, but flour, bacon and butter, the products of the new farming community that could function because it had the railway that Red River had not had. The freighting of the supplies to the north passed from the York boats to steam boats on Lake Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan, but the same men, those of mixed blood and the Métis, the old work force of the Company, still handled freight.

The same remained true of ordinary people. The local people of Indian descent trapped from their reserves and sold to local fur buyers until very recent times. The new settlers took up something of the old ways of life, the movement by cart trail, the quick work of summer, the long routine of winter. And the old population of Red River and the new comers mingled in church and marriage, and it became a matter of quiet pride in Winnipeg to have a Red River ancestry.

The reverse, of course, also happened. The farming on the river lots improved with new machinery, new tools, new crops. Sadly enough those who could not make the changes, many of the Métis of the Red and Assiniboia, moved out to carry on the old life for another fifteen years until it was finally broken in the suppression of the Saskatchewan Rebellion. But in general the old population and the new lived side by side in harmony, or mingled, rather than the new replacing the old. The new settlers were rather overwhelming, of course—mere numbers did that—but visible islands of old Red River remained, and still remain in the churches, and houses, in the French heart of St Boniface, and in the street names of Winnipeg.

The change was largely harmonious because it was, except for the Métis who moved, a double and mutual change. The survivors of the old order took up the new way of life. Red River men entered the new professions and took up the new opportunities in business. They went into politics, notably John Norquay, Premier of Manitoba, 1878 to '86. They continued to serve their churches, and one, the Most Rev. S. P. Matheson, became Archbishop of Rupert's Land and Primate of all Canada. Even the great Company, the Charter of which had not confined it to the fur trade (nature had done that) became at once storekeeper and land agent to the new population. Its store at Fort Garry had always been open to any buyer, and simply continued to be so, although with an ever increasing stock. The walls of Fort Garry itself were dynamited to clear South Main Street, and offices and a new store opened in 1881 were built on Main south. That great emporium, redolent of currants and brown sugar, splashed with scarlet woollens and gleaming silks, still with something of the aroma and plenty of the trading store, is even today a fond memory of older Winnipeggers. It prepared the way for the new, great, limestone store opened in 1926, 'The Bay' of Winnipeg parlance, and for the stores reaching to the Pacific, and now even to Montreal, over all the old domain of the Company. Nor was The Bay merely a shopping centre, it became, with the museum and the dining room and cafeteria, very much a social and even intellectual centre for much of Winnipeg.

It seems, in the retrospect of a century, that it was fitting it should have been. The Company was not before 1870 just a commercial concern; in the large, rather casual way of the seventeenth century when men and traders looked out for themselves with little more than a licence from government for their actions, if so much, it was also a landlord and a government. And with great power went great responsibility, to shareholders certainly, but also to the government that licensed, the men that served, the Indians without whom there would have been little fur trade, even the animals whose pelts fed the coffers of the Company, as when conservation was called for in the take of beaver after 1821.

Such a company was a large part of the community in which it operated, and thus there had grown up around the Company of businesslike fur traders a code of trade and government which served not only commerce but even settlement, however reluctantly. Its benevolence extended to missions, when a member of the Company's Court, Benjamin Harrison, had missionary interests, and still more to the interests of travellers and scientists whose published accounts were finally to change the popular understanding of the Northwest and open the way to settlement. Red River was the chief example of this commercial and cautious benevolence, and Red River was the matrix and model of Manitoba. How providential that the hundredth anniversary of Manitoba should strike in the same year, and close on the echoes of the three-hundredth anniversary of the Company! ♦



Clearing the site in September 1925 for the big department store that still serves Winnipeg, as shown on page 32 in the foreground.

A TERCENTENARY MAP

RUPERT'S LAND

The Charter of 1670 granted to the Adventurers a plantation or colony in America, the extent of which was entirely unknown, but the name of which was to be Rupert's Land. The extent of the territory of which they were to be 'the true and absolute Lordes and Proprietors' hinged upon Hudson Strait and was in effect the watershed draining into Hudson Bay and Strait. In modern terms, this was a stretch of country from the Labrador border to the Rocky Mountains, covering the northern parts of Quebec and Ontario, the whole of Manitoba, most of Saskatchewan, the southern half of Alberta, and a large portion of the Northwest Territories, as well as parts of Minnesota and North Dakota.

LICENCE TO TRADE

Upon the coalition of the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies in 1821, involving trading posts in the far northwest and the Pacific coast area, further privileges were granted in a Royal Licence dated 5 December that year for exclusive right to trade with the Indians north and west of the United States, actually the territories not already covered by the Charter, with the exception of the British colonial provinces in North America. By an earlier agreement American citizens had joint access to trade on the Pacific coast.

ASSINIBOIA (SELKIRK GRANT)

Having set up two colonies of Scottish emigrants in Canada, the humanitarian Lord Selkirk heard of the rich lands of Red River. He acquired shares in the Hudson's Bay Company and in 1811 for a token payment of ten shillings he was granted 116,000 square miles of the Company's territory in Rupert's Land. Here he was to set up an agricultural colony, which was called Assiniboia, supply the Company with servants, and provide land for those who retired, but the settlers were not to engage in the fur trade. Settling at the forks, where waterborne and prairie traffic converged, Red River colony (or settlement) was the name commonly used for this precursor of Winnipeg. Assiniboia was repurchased by the Company in 1836 from Lord Selkirk's heirs.

THE FERTILE BELT

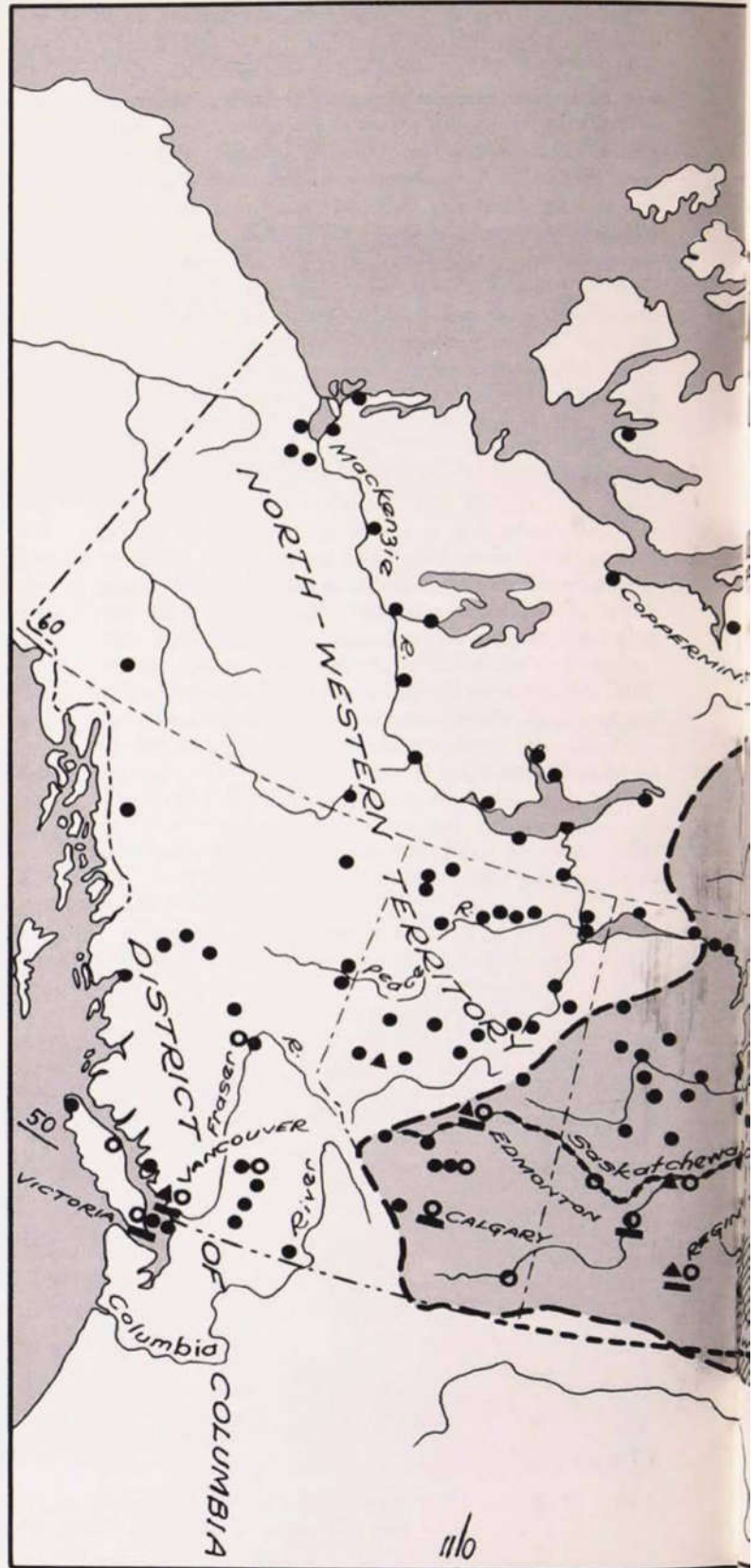
When Rupert's Land was given up, part of the compensation to the HBC was one-twentieth of the land to be settled in the fertile belt (which amounted eventually to nearly seven million acres). The 'Fertile Belt' mentioned by Palliser and by Hind in the 1850s was expanded by definition in the Deed of Surrender to span the country from Lake of the Woods to the Rockies, and the North Saskatchewan to the United States border.

PROVINCE OF MANITOBA

Manitoba, as first constituted in 1870 following the transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada, was an extremely small province of 14,340 square miles. Twice it was enlarged until it attained its present boundaries, with an area of some 250,000 square miles and a coastline on Hudson Bay.

HBC ESTABLISHMENTS

Besides the present Company establishments as shown here, in earlier days there were posts in the western states as far south as San Francisco (Yerba Buena), Fort Yukon in Russian America (Alaska), an agency in the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii), and agencies in Siberia.



LEGEND

Rupert's Land

Assiniboia (Selkirk Grant)

Fertile Belt

Manitoba 1870

H B C Establishments 1970

Large department stores

Smaller stores

Wholesale offices

Raw fur branches

60

50

90

70





BROWN COLLECTION, PROVINCIAL MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES OF ALBERTA

An H B C train of carts from the north arrives in Calgary in 1888, laden with furs valued at \$75,000.

THE PAST HUNDRED YEARS

By Robert Oleson

AS THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY entered its third century it relinquished the favoured position it had cherished and defended for over two hundred years. Following the Deed of Surrender, accepted 22 June 1870, Rupert's Land became part of Canada, to be developed as the Dominion Government decreed. The Company gave up its trade monopoly and agreed to compete on equal terms with any rival that chose to challenge its position.

With the settlement of the West, the Company's business was to change radically. Emphasis shifted from the fur trade to landed estate and finally to retail trade. In Western Canada, the H B C had decided advantages over a new comer. It had established reputation and prestige, and it had the confidence of the Indians as a fair trader in quality goods. One hundred and forty-four posts were operated by experienced men who knew the Indians and how to trade with them. On the surface the Company presented itself as a formidable contender to any challenge; in reality its position was not as stable as it appeared.

Mr. Oleson, a recent graduate of the University of Manitoba, is doing post graduate historical research.

Since 1866, net profits from the fur trade had been falling, due to higher operating costs and the growing inefficiency of the communications network. This decaying condition was aggravated by the uprising at the Red River Settlement in 1869-70. In 1871, net profits from furs reached a low of £27,000. The Governor and Committee were 'most carefully reconsidering the future position of the Company with reference not only to its business as a fur trading company, but with reference to its position as a great commercial company.' Their conclusion was that a 'thorough and efficient reorganization' of the fur trade was essential.

A small minority of 'independent shareholders' did not concur with these views. They believed that the fur trade would not be profitable and should be abandoned. The Committee, on the other hand, considered that it 'would be exceedingly unwise . . . to abandon a branch of business . . . which they believed could and would be very productive in the future'. They planned two major changes: to ship and return goods from several districts through the railroad systems of the United States—a shorter and faster route than via York Factory on Hudson Bay—and to use steamers for speedier delivery on major inland

lakes and rivers. This change would also solve the problem of recruiting voyageurs, now in short supply.

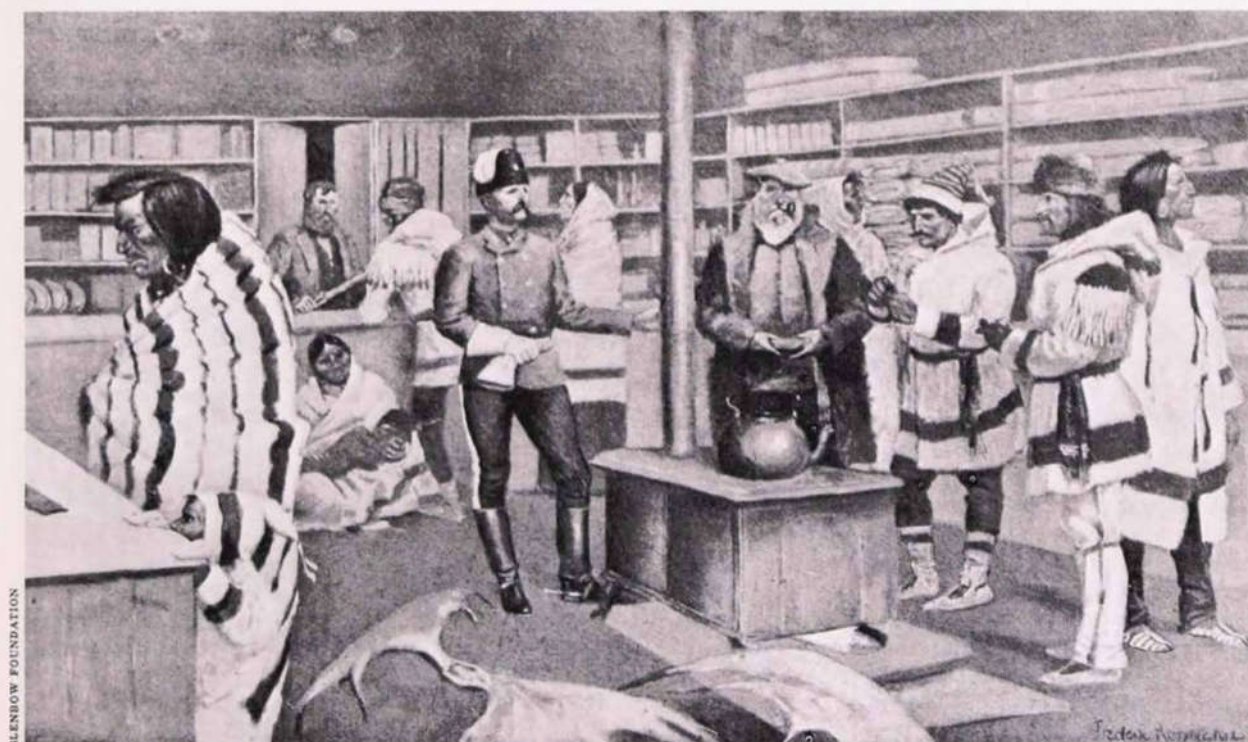
The Committee lost no time implementing these changes. In 1872, the first steamer was on Lake Winnipeg and by 1875 the *Northcote* had made a round trip between Grand Rapids and Edmonton. Two steamers based in Victoria, were developing trade on the Pacific coast and furs from the Northern Department were being returned by rail through the United States. Some of the posts had been abandoned, and cut-backs in expenses were achieved. In 1872 and 1873, fur prices rose and the increase was maintained over the next two years, enabling the Company to record an average net profit of over £100,000 for the four-year period.

A third change in reorganization concerned the Deed Poll, the agreement between the officers and Company, which, dating back to 1821, set out the duties and responsibilities of the officers, the benefits allowed them, and the basis upon which they received remuneration. Collectively the officers were entitled to 40 per cent of the trading profits which were divided among them on a share basis according to rank. When the Deed of Surrender had been arranged in 1869, the officers had not been consulted and had not profited in any way. Since trade was no longer based on a monopoly, they claimed that the spirit of the Deed Poll had been broken, that a new agreement should be arranged and their interest bought out for £100,000.

A new Deed Poll was drafted, increasing the number of officers' shares from 85 to 100 and the number of classes of officers from two to five. The officers were to retain 40 per cent of the trading profits, but would be excluded from sharing in profits from the landed estate. This agreement was duly accepted by both parties, but the officers signed grudgingly. The discontent caused by the Company's going public in 1863 and by the completion of the Deed of Surrender in 1870, both without consultation, nagged the Canadian partners. The decreases in their remunerations over the past five years had also been a disappointment and seeds were sown for a full-fledged confrontation if their position did not improve.

In 1876 the accumulated effect of the general depression of 1873 hit the fur trade. Prices dropped to their lowest level in twenty years while operating expenses increased. In 1877 net losses were £3,000; in 1878 losses totalled £28,000. In these years no dividends were paid to shareholders and no remuneration was due the officers. The situation brought the discontent among the Canadian partners to a head. In good years and bad they had maintained a fairly steady volume of furs, working equally hard from one year to the next, unaware of the immediate fluctuations in the markets of far-off Europe. Their efforts were lauded by the directors, but in 1877

The interior of the H B C fort at Edmonton 1886, from a painting by Frederic Remington.





Several H B C Chief Factors in Montreal, 1871: (1) Lawrence Clarke, (2) Donald A. Smith, (3) James Bissett, (4) Peter Warren Bell, (5) George S. McTavish, (6) Alexander McDonald and (7) Colin F. Rankin.

sympathy was all they received. Again in 1878 when no remuneration was due, the officers made strong representation to the Committee and received a grant of £100 a share as a temporary expedient. They were not overwhelmed by this generosity, and failing to obtain a concrete commitment from the Chief Commissioner at the annual council at Fort Carlton in 1878, they took independent action. A majority of the 'winterers' under the leadership of George S. McTavish, formed the Fur Trade Party through which they could confront the Board as a united group. They gave Donald Smith, then Land Commissioner, power-of-attorney to represent their cause in London. Their main demand was for an annual minimum salary of £200 for each share held.

Before Donald Smith had the opportunity to press the case of the Fur Trade Party in England, the Company offered a guaranteed minimum income of £150 a share per annum over a four-year period. If profits exceeded £60,000 the officers were to receive £200 a share, and if profits were over £90,000 the remuneration would rise accordingly. The officers eventually accepted the offer. The Company extended the revised Deed Poll to 1893, when a new agreement abolished the system of commission and established salary rates according to each officer's standing.

As reorganization progressed, Company profits fluctuated from year to year. Dividends were not paid in 1885 and 1888, despite attempts in 1884 to provide better management. Part of the Supplemental Charter of 1884 had provided for the appointment of two residents of

Canada to the London Board as an advisory subcommittee. In this capacity Donald Smith and Sanford Fleming (the latter a member of the London Board since 1881) were to advise the London Committee in the supervision, regulation, and management of the Canadian business. A further step was the establishment of a Trade Commissioner in Winnipeg in 1891, providing a central authority. The commissioners of land and trade still reported separately to London each year so that departmental interaction was not fully achieved.

Unrest among the shareholders continued and repeated demands for 'new blood' on the Board were made. In 1889 a group calling themselves the H B C Shareholders Association demanded the separation of the fur trade and land department. They asked that shares be issued on the Company's landed estate and for a more active land policy. The Board opposed these ideas, not wanting to part with its land too hastily, but to turn it to profit as the demand arose. The majority of shareholders agreed. After due consideration, the Board decided that shares on the basis of one preferred and one deferred share should be issued for each ordinary share. A Supplemental Charter was granted in 1892 to provide for this change.

The difference of opinion focused the attention on two areas of interest—land and trade. Under the Deed of Surrender the H B C was entitled to a specified acreage around its various posts and to one-twentieth of the land surveyed by the Canadian Government in the 'fertile belt'. The Company shared the cost of surveying at a rate not to exceed eight cents per granted acre.

At first HBC land was chosen by lot; this method was later discarded in favour of a uniform scheme whereby the Company was granted analogous sections in each township. Ultimately it received almost seven million acres of land and disposed of most of it by 1950.

As a landholder, the Company had a quite liberal policy on the purchase of land. Town lots were sold for a down payment of one-fifth of the market price with the balance payable in four annual instalments at seven per cent; farm lands were sold in instalments over eight years.

Care was taken to attract a 'good class of settler' who would take up permanent residence, cultivate the land and contribute to the development of the country. The Land Commissioner used his discretion in dealing with those who fell behind in payments and applied 'no vigorous pursuit' in making collection unless absolutely necessary.

To increase the value of its land, the Governor and Committee built grist and saw mills in the 1880s and expanded store operations in areas where it was justified by the population. They subsidized local development and spent substantial sums to develop transportation facilities, roads and bridges.

To encourage settlement, the Land Commissioner in 1881 began engaging survey crews to inspect, describe and classify as timber lot, swamp or dry land, each section of land. This information was available to prospective buyers in the Winnipeg and London offices. The Company also co-operated with the Dominion and Imperial Governments and with the Canadian Pacific Railway to advertise and settle the land.

Until the turn of the century land sales were moderate except for a brief boom from 1880 to 1883 when 1,300 lots were sold in Winnipeg and a considerable number were sold at Rat Portage (Kenora), West Lynn (Emerson) and

H B C land sale, Edmonton, 13 May 1912.



PROVINCIAL MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES OF ALBERTA



Hudson's Bay Oil and Gas lay pipe in southwest Alberta.

Portage la Prairie. On the West Coast sales were slow, other than the sale of 242 lots in Victoria in 1884.

In 1898 the Governor reported that an 'active demand both for Farm Lands and Town Lots has recently set in'. That year the trickle of immigration into the prairies swelled to a torrent and the 'active demand' for land resulted in the sale of 4.8 million acres over the next three decades.

Revenue from sales was used to operate the land department, to pay taxes, increase investment, pay dividends and reduce capital. On the basis of the land profits, the issued capital of the Company was reduced from £2 million in 1870 to £1 million in 1905. In 1912 the Company began setting aside \$2.00 for each acre sold; this Capital Reserve Fund was of vital importance during the lean years of the thirties. Land profits were also used to expand the Company's retail business, to modernize existing stores and to construct new ones.

According to the Deed of Surrender, HBC lands were to be subject to 'no exceptional tax' and from time to time the Company used this guarantee as a basis on which to fight legislation that it felt was prejudicial. In 1878 it challenged the Manitoba Land Tax Act and won its case. In 1918 it faced three acts that considerably increased its tax burden: Alberta's Wild Land Tax Act, Manitoba's Unoccupied Lands Tax Act and Saskatchewan's Land Surtax Act. The Company challenged two of these acts and was defeated in the Provincial Courts.

After 1930 the Land Department steadily declined in importance. It operated at a substantial loss from 1931 to 1935 when cancelled sales were greater than new sales. As a result of the heavy tax burden, the Company wrote off over half a million acres of land between 1933 and 1943. In 1954, when it was left with 18,250 acres, it sold the remainder of its holdings in Manitoba and Alberta to the



In 1887 the first H B C store (on the left) opened in Vancouver. A year later the second store was built to sell wines and spirits which, by city by-law, had to be contained in a separate building.



The delivery system of the Winnipeg Retail Store on Main Street, circa 1914.

respective provincial governments. The last major parcel of fifty acres in Victoria was sold in 1961 to the University of Victoria. Today the Company is still deriving considerable profit from investments as a direct result of its landed estate. From 1910 onward, it had retained mineral rights to the land sold; in 1927 the HBC joined with Marland Oil Company to carry out geological surveys with a view to developing the natural resources.

When Marland Oil Company amalgamated with Continental Oil Company in 1929, an agreement was signed between the new Continental Oil Company and HBC. The name of Hudson's Bay Marland Oil Company was changed to Hudson's Bay Oil and Gas Company Ltd. The petroleum and natural gas rights on 4½ million acres of land were leased to Hudson's Bay Oil and Gas Company on a royalty basis. Today HBC owns 21.9 per cent of the common shares of Hudson's Bay Oil and Gas and is supporting oil exploration in Canada's north. Mineral rights were transferred to Rupert's Land Trading Company, a Canadian based wholly-owned HBC subsidiary, in 1947.

The retail trade was a natural outgrowth of the fur trade. As the frontier retreated there was increasing demand from settlers for goods on a cash basis. The Fort Garry post is an example of the evolution of trading post to modern department store.

In 1870 there were only several hundred people in Winnipeg; by 1880 it was a bustling city of about 10,000. The HBC had been serving the community at its Fort Garry shop which was one of the 'old-fashioned Hudson's Bay establishments' and which 'had been very suitable for trading with the Indians but not for showing off the Company's goods to advantage'.

'There is no part of the world where competition is much keener,' said Governor Colville speaking of Winnipeg in the 1880s. In 1881 the Company demolished its outdated sales shop at Fort Garry, constructed a new three-storey building at Main and York, and recruited in England experienced staff with a knowledge of dry goods, hardware and groceries. The same year new stores were built in West Lynne and in Portage la Prairie. The Company, encouraged by the success of these stores, continued to build in other communities. A brick store was built in Victoria in 1859, completing the evolution from post to store. Stores were opened in Vancouver in 1887, in Edmonton in 1890, Lethbridge in 1891 and Saskatoon in 1922. In 1891, the business of Messrs. Baker and Co., was purchased, including their sales shop in Calgary which was renovated and opened again for business. The same year, anticipating future development, town lots and some buildings were bought in Calgary, Lethbridge and Macleod.

This growth did not impress all the shareholders. Some wanted greater profits from the trade; others called for abandonment of trading altogether. One shareholder was convinced that 'this Company is simply a land company and that the trading branch is going to the dogs as fast as



The Calgary store, 1891.

GLENBOW FOUNDATION

it can'. The Committee did not agree and built impressive buildings of similar style in Yorkton, Calgary, Vancouver and Victoria. The stores in Edmonton, Winnipeg and Lethbridge were remodelled. In various cities warehouses were constructed as a base for wholesale and fur departments and as storage facilities for the retail stores. This gave controlled centralized distribution and freed floor space in the stores, an important commodity in a competitive business.

Between 1910 and 1914 reorganization and expansion brought considerable returns. The business was now divided into three sections: Land, Fur Trade, and Sale Shops. A man 'especially conversant with the respective interests' provided central control of each.

In March 1912 a more significant change was announced by the Governor: 'With the object of having the best local advice and cooperation for themselves and the three Commissioners, the Governor and Committee invited Mr. A. M. Nanton, Mr. George Galt and Sir William Whyte all resident in Winnipeg to act as a Local Committee in an advisory capacity, for which their long acquaintance with the North-West pre-eminently fits them.' The new Canadian Advisory Committee was not given ample opportunity to prove itself; the Great War interrupted developments until 1918.

During the war and post-war period (1914-23) land sales decreased slightly but average prices were high. The fur trade suffered substantial losses in 1915 and 1921 but established record profits in 1919, 1920, 1922 and 1923. The retail and wholesale divisions showed impressive profits, mainly due to the fact that HBC acted as a buying agent for the Government of France and had supplied the French nation with over thirteen million tons of goods from 1916 to 1923. The conclusion of this trade showed the wholesale and retail business to be suffering from keen competition and the post-war slump.



Revillon Frères trading post at Peace River, circa 1914.

GLENOW FOUNDATION

When the Company set out to overhaul its operations one of the first problems surveyed was the burden of double taxation. Profits were taxed in both Canada and England and each country taxed the holdings in the respective countries. In 1920 taxes on land in Canada alone were more than \$2,000,000.

'Force of circumstance,' reported the Governor in 1920, 'is therefore driving your directors to examine carefully the possibility of turning some at least of our departments into purely Canadian enterprises with a separate board of directors in Canada administering its affairs.' The Company did not institute this policy as far as it concerned a 'purely Canadian enterprise' but it did implement an increase in local control and administration. The Canadian Advisory Committee was renamed the Canadian Committee, enlarged and given authority in 1923 over all departments in Canada. Its responsibilities and duties were further broadened in 1929-30 when power-of-attorney was granted and Winnipeg made the headquarters for all Canadian operations.

In 1923 the reorganization that had been interrupted by the war was resumed. Frederick H. Richmond, (managing director of Debenham's and a member of the HBC Committee since 1922) was sent out from London to evaluate the position of the stores; his findings indicated that a major overhaul was in order. He submitted a blistering criticism of all operations with particular reference to the management of various stores. His recommendations resulted in more efficient operation; some stores were remodelled and the new store in Winnipeg which had been on the planning board as early as 1912 was completed in 1926. By 1930 the retail business was once again showing good profits in spite of keen competition.



DON BLAIR

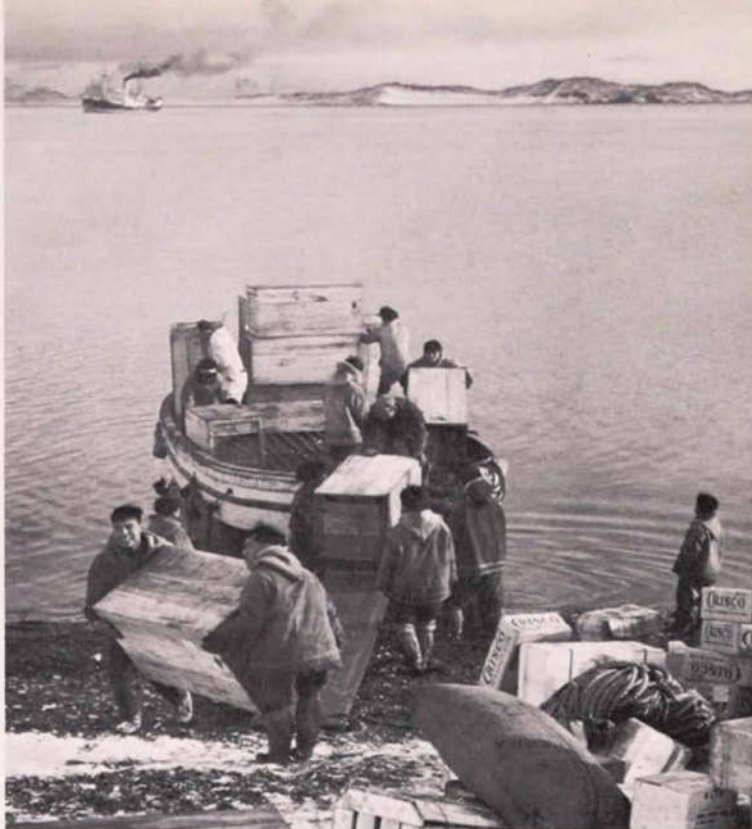
Furs traded at arctic stores (above at Cambridge Bay) and collected by raw fur departments may be assembled at this 1951 auction in New York.

In the fur department the practice of selling furs on consignment from organizations or individuals, begun as early as 1920, proved advantageous. A number of special agencies had been set up to purchase raw furs for cash; this led later to the establishment of a fur auction in Montreal. In London, the Company in 1924 acquired the business of Messrs Lampson Limited, a raw fur company with connections in New York. Further expansion came through the purchase of a controlling interest in Revillon Frères Trading Company, raw fur branch of the Paris-based furriers with forty posts and seventeen outposts in Northern Canada. The fur trade chain was extended along the Labrador coast with the acquisition of the Labrador Company in 1925. A long-established firm dealing in fish products, Job Bros. Co. of St. John's, Newfoundland, was also taken over.

The wholesale department expanded in 1928, through the establishment of an office in New York and the formation of La Baie d'Hudson in Paris.

This over-all rapid development required increased capital. In 1913 the Company issued four per cent Cumulative Preference Shares, followed in 1925 by the first issue of ordinary shares since 1863. A further increase in capital to £4.5 million was made in 1929.

Despite progress, a minority of shareholders were still dissatisfied. In 1929-30 a Mr C. L. Nordon made serious personal accusations in reference to Governor Sale and the acquisition of the Merchant's Trading Company in 1920. He questioned the objectivity of both the Governor and Deputy Governor in carrying out business and the Committee's management of accounts and certain investments in London. To investigate these allegations a Select Committee was formed of several independent shareholders. This Committee duly ruled that the Governor and Deputy Governor had carried out business in a proper manner, that the Committee was justified in increasing capital, that all funds were accounted for and in use and that the Committee's actions concerning the rental of properties were not subject to question. The investigating group felt, however, that the public accounts should be made more understandable and provide more information. And they recommended the formation of 'Hudson's Bay Company Stores Ltd.' registered in Canada. They also recommended that the London business be restricted to the fur trade and management of land, that the Committee be reduced in size, and that no member be appointed Managing Director, but that a manager be engaged to conduct the business. At a General Court called to table and discuss the report, Governor Sale and three board members disagreed with the recommendations and resigned. After considerable discussion the remaining members decided that the Committee should be reconstituted on the basis of consultation with the various factions. The report was carried 'except with regard to the specific suggestions and recommendations contained in that report which shall be remitted for further consideration'.



Supplies are brought ashore to an Eastern Arctic settlement from H B C's Nascopie.

The appointment of the new Governor, Patrick Ashley Cooper, was a wise and prudent choice. In his opening remarks to the shareholders he stated, 'I know quite well that reference to our past glories is a very poor consolation to a body of shareholders who find themselves in the position which you do today . . . (Hear, Hear!) you need only expect from me plain unvarnished facts—probably unpalatable facts.'

For four years, Governor Cooper presented 'unpalatable facts' in abundance, but not without encouragement for the future. Over a three year period (1931-33) the trading departments suffered losses of £1.2 million; provisions to protect investments and subsidiary companies provided a further deficit of £2.2 million. Losses in the Land Department, excluding lands written off, were just under £200,000 from 1931 to 1934. To correct the situation the company began an overhaul of its affairs.

Personnel changes were made from management to clerk level. New commissioners were appointed to the Fur and Land Departments and a new General Manager and Chief Executive Officer to the Retail Department. The retail store in Lethbridge was closed in 1931, and old buildings in several locations were sold. The same year the retail trade was split into two sections: large stores and small stores. The small stores (the four smallest retail stores and four large posts from the Fur Trade Department) were organized under one executive so that similar lines of policy, buying and sales promotion could be followed. A training program was started in the retail



Norway House, 1963.

stores in 1933 to prepare some employees for management and to enable promotion from within the Company. The program produced satisfactory results and was developed; today the HBC retail management training program is regarded as one of the best of its type in North America.

The wholesale operations were restricted to the distribution of wines and spirits, Fort Garry coffee and tea, tobacco and the traditional 'Point' blankets. Fur trade posts and districts were regrouped, several posts abandoned and methods of management, supervision and inspection improved. Fur Purchasing Agencies on the other hand were increased. As a result of these changes by 1935 all departments—Land, Fur, Retail and Wholesale were showing a profit. In 1937 for the first time every store showed a profit.

The most significant developments were in the Fur Trade Department. In northern settlements, furs were still collected, but merchandise of every sort was also sold and to a value that was 'considerably in excess of fur collected'. In 1958, the name of the Fur Trade Department was changed to Northern Stores. The use of short wave transmitters was extended to the Eastern Arctic and the use of aeroplanes was greatly increased. Merchandise operations even in the most remote areas had changed from the barter system to purchasing and there was demand for a greater selection of merchandise.

During the war, the main fur auction was transferred from London to New York and carried on through Lampson, Fraser and Huth Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary. In 1941 fur prices were the highest since 1929 and a record number of consignments were sold. In 1946 the London auctions were re-established and three years later had regained international prominence, selling furs from almost every fur-producing area in the world.

The most important development during the decade was the alteration in the status of the Canadian Committee which had conducted affairs in North America since 1930 from Hudson's Bay House in Winnipeg. By 1956 the growth and diversity of its responsibilities indicated that a change should be made. A new Supplemental Charter was applied for which abolished the Canadian Committee of six and created the Canadian Committee of the Board. The London Committee was to consist of the Governor, Deputy Governor and from ten to twelve members, not more than six of whom were resident outside the United Kingdom. In reality, the Canadian Committee became members, on equal terms, of the London Committee. In 1960 the London Committee was broadened to 16 members, not more than eight to be non-residents of the United Kingdom; again in November 1963 it was increased to twenty and the residence qualification removed. For those who felt that this meant an imminent move to Canada, the Governor stated: 'There is no present intention to alter the residence of the Company, the administrative headquarters, including the residence of the Governors, or the existing executive organization. The expansion of the Company's activities, however which now stretch from coast to coast in Canada makes it desirable to have more members of the Board resident in Canada.'

The past decade has been one of vigorous expansion. In 1960 the HBC merged with Henry Morgan & Co. Limited, a 115-year-old company in Eastern Canada. By July 1962 the total interests of Morgan's had been acquired; a large department store and several shopping centres and smaller units in Montreal, and stores in

Frobisher Bay store offers fresh fruit, vegetables and frozen meat.



FRED BRUENNER

Toronto, Hamilton and Ottawa were turned over to HBC but continued to operate under the name of Morgan's. A ten million dollar extension and parkade were added to the Montreal main store, the store at Dorval was doubled, and a new store erected in a Toronto suburb. There are now eleven stores, five in Montreal, five in the Toronto-Hamilton area (four operating as 'The Bay') and one in Ottawa.

In the West a new department store with parkade was opened in Regina in 1968. Parkades at Winnipeg and Calgary were enlarged and a new one opened in Saskatoon. Sites for stores in shopping centres were acquired in Calgary, Vancouver and Winnipeg; to date, two stores in the Vancouver suburbs of Richmond and Burnaby have been opened, and others in Toronto and Edmonton are scheduled for this year.

Fourteen new Northern Stores were built in the last ten years and over thirty remodelled or replaced. Fur is now only a tenth of their business but in them the stock of goods, refrigeration for frozen packaged foods, arrangements for self service are as up to date as in the big cities to the south. Modern comfortable living quarters are provided for staff and contact is maintained with the 'outside' through a comprehensive radio-telephone network system pioneered by the HBC in co-operation with the federal government. These stores, many of them very remote, are supplied by rail, road, tractor train or ship. The Company operates two ships, tugs and barges, and three aircraft which are used for transferring personnel, inspection trips, and small freighting jobs.

In recent years keen competition has developed by way of 'discount' stores which operate on the basis of volume sale of goods at cut-rate prices with a minimum of customer service. This has been counteracted by the inception of 'budget floors' and 'bargain basements'. Since 1965 Company stores have steadily increased in sales volume.

The wholesale department has been stabilized and shows increased profits. Its famous Hudson's Bay 'Point' blankets, tobacco, and wines and spirits are today, as yesterday, important commodities of trade. The fur trade fluctuates but is once again showing gains; sales at the Company's auctions in London, Montreal, and New York are an integral part of the trade.

The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay enter their fourth century optimistically. Once doing business in a scattering of forts beside that bay, they are now established across the length, breadth, and depth of Canada with two hundred and fifty stores, large and small, and twenty-three wholesale branches. And as in the days of old, raw fur departments (eight of them) and northern stores are still collecting the pelts upon which the Adventurers founded their enterprise in 1670. ♦

A warehouse in 1912, Hudson's Bay House in Winnipeg has been recently reconstructed, 1970.

GEORGE HUNTER



The Saskatoon store, 1968.

GEORGE HUNTER



The Lawrence Plaza store, Toronto, 1961.

HELEN HURGENS

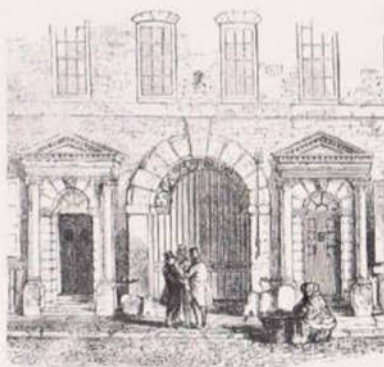


NOW AND THEN

These thumbnail sketches depict in a few words and a miscellany of new and old pictures some of the places where the Hudson's Bay Company conducts its business. The text is by Shirlee A. Smith, the Company librarian.



LONDON



Hudson's Bay House,
3 and 4 Fenchurch Street, c. 1840.

IN THE 1660s London was one of the world's great centres of commerce: a powerful magnet for Radisson and Des Groseilliers with their ideas for the fur trade with the New World. The traders won the support of King Charles II and a group of courtiers and city men. When the *Nonsuch*

voyage confirmed their expectations with a cargo of prime furs, eighteen 'adventurers' petitioned the King for a Charter which was granted on the 2nd of May 1670, incorporating the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay.

In the years immediately before and following incorporation, the Company had no premises in London. Committee meetings and General Courts were held in places that varied from the lodgings in Whitehall of Prince Rupert, the first Governor, to city taverns, or from the Tower of London to aboard ship at Gravesend.

The first recorded public sale of the Company was held at Garraway's Coffee-house in 1672. The minutes for 16 January mention 'That the publicke Sale formerly ordred to bee upon the 24th of January next bee confirmed, & that Mr Kirke Mr Radisson & goosbery bee desired to Morrow morneing to take care that

the lb. 3000 weight of beaver ordred to bee Sould bee divided into Sevall lotts of about lb. 100 to a lott . . . Three months later 8,000 lb. more were sold.

The auctions were not always limited to furs. In the 18th and 19th centuries they often included such items as feathers, goose quills, whale fins, and walrus tusks.

In February 1682 the Adventurers leased Scriveners' Hall, located on the east side of Noble Street off Cheapside where, beginning in March, Company meetings were held. A letter dated 13 August 1683, signed by Sir Christopher Wren and some of his fellow Committee members, requested that a reply be addressed to 'the Governor & Compa. of Adventurers of England trading into Hudsons Bay at the Hudsons Bay house in Noble Street London'.

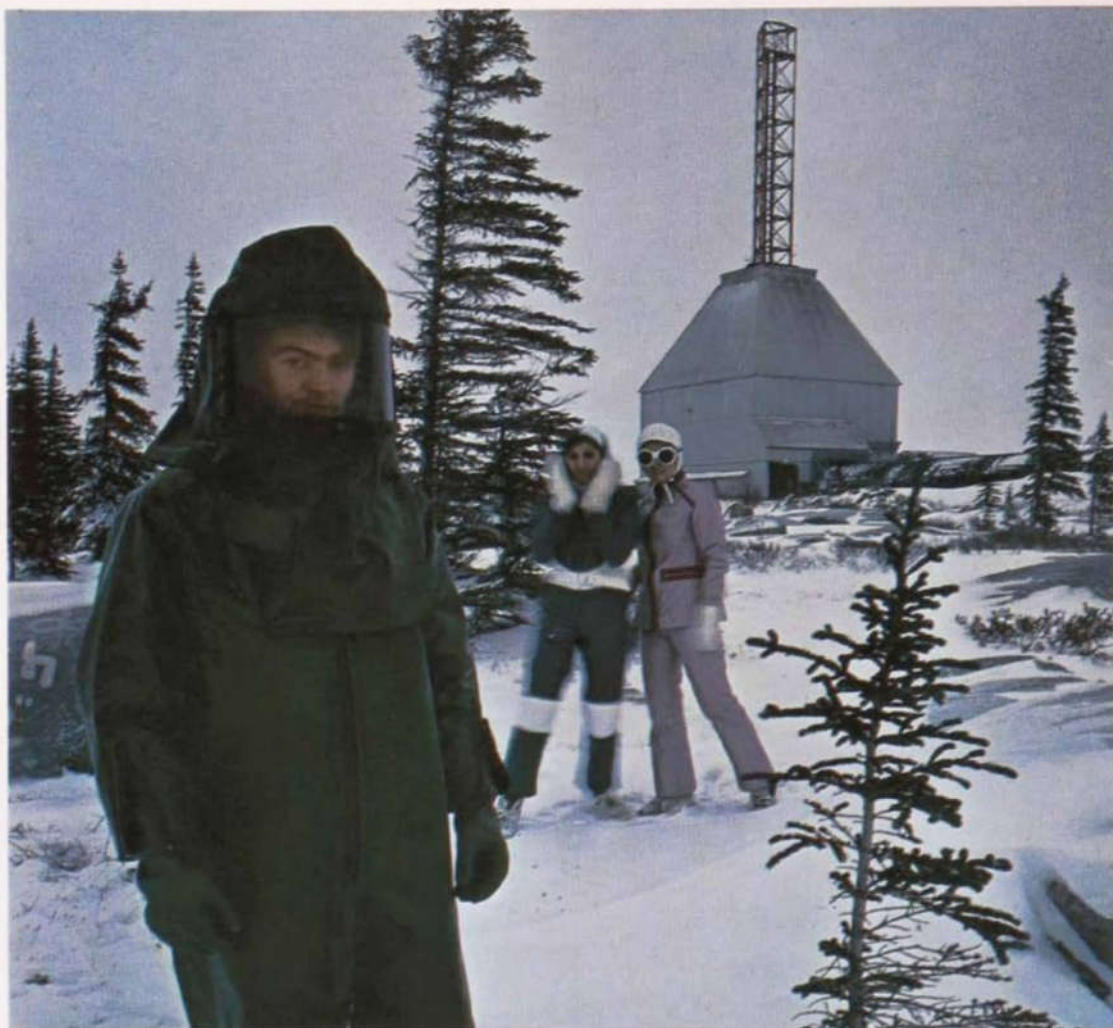
When the lease on Scriveners' Hall terminated in 1696 the Company moved to the north side of Fenchurch Street and in 1794 it moved again to Nos. 3 and 4 Fenchurch Street, at the southwest end. In 1865 No. 1 Lime Street was leased and the building was known as Hudson's Bay House until the lease expired in 1923. By then premises had been acquired on Garlick Hill, the site of the present Beaver House, which was formally opened 4 May 1925.

The Hudson's Bay Company is the oldest chartered trading company in the world. At one time it owned about forty per cent of the present land area of Canada and it administered this territory with firmness and fairness based on British law. After 200 years of trading with the Indians and Eskimos it has evolved into one of the largest retail firms in Canada. The Company's fur-trading interests have continued and today the London fur sales handle fifty-six different varieties of furs from forty-eight countries.



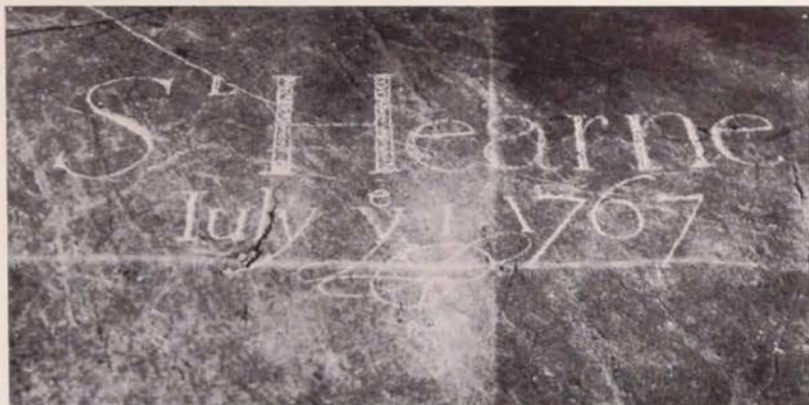
ARNAUD MAGEN

Precious furs from Canada and many other countries are gathered at Beaver House for the great fur auctions.



ARNOLD MAJOR

*Research rocket launch facilities
poke above the stunted trees and
snow-swept rocks.*



Across the river from modern Churchill old cannon at Fort Prince of Wales face the bay. Upstream at Sloop Cove, where vessels wintered, Samuel Hearne's is one of the names inscribed on the rocks.



CHURCHILL

'WE PITCH'D OUR TENTS & I Gott my bedding ashore, but was Wellcom'd by Such a Quantity of Musketo that as soon as they light . . . we are nothing in the World but Knotts & bumps.' So wrote James Knight on 16 July 1717 when he arrived on the Churchill River to build a fort for the Hudson's Bay Company. Before Knight had the buildings erected he hung a number of hatchets and knives from the beacon at the mouth of the river so that passing natives would know he was in the area. Even then it obviously paid to advertise.

Fort Prince of Wales, as the new establishment was called, was not an easy one to manage. Wood and water were scarce and it was difficult to stabilize the trade as the Northern Indians came down only every other year. Nevertheless, by 1731 the London Committee had decided to build a new fort. It was to be a stone fortress which would be safe from French attack and would protect the Company's best harbour. This fort with its starlike perimeter enclosed by a masonry wall rising to a height of sixteen feet nine inches took forty years to build. In August 1782 it was

captured by the French Admiral de la Pérouse. Samuel Hearne, who was Governor of the fort, did not have enough men to man the guns, and although he was taken prisoner he was back the following year to rebuild Churchill farther upstream.

Here at this isolated post scientific and exploring expeditions were welcomed starting with William Wales and Joseph Dymond of The Royal Society observing the transit of Venus across the sun in 1769; in July 1846 Dr John Rae left on his first Arctic expedition; and Dr Robert Bell of the Geological Survey of Canada arrived in 1879 to report on the region.

By 1929 the Hudson Bay Railway was completed with its terminus at Churchill and the following year a contract was let for a 2,500,000 bushel grain elevator. The Company moved its store across the river to the new townsite on the east shore.

Today Churchill has a population of around 6,000 with a blending of cultures. From mid-July to about mid-October it is Canada's most northerly seaport, with ships carrying grain and potash.

A new modern store was built by the Company in 1963-4, twice the size of the former one. Frozen foods and desserts are kept in the grocer's refrigerator cases, and the usual staples—tea, flour, lard, sugar—are flanked by such gourmet treats as wild rice, imported biscuits, maraschino cherries, and mushroom sauce. In other departments there are women's hats and dresses, infants' wear and household linens, men's clothing and hardware. Furs are also purchased.

Five miles from Churchill is Fort Churchill, a former military base, which houses the Department of Transport (weather and communications stations), a Company store carrying dry goods and food, Department of Public Works, and a rocket research range. The research range is managed by the National Research Council of Canada and the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration.



ARNOLD MAGGS

Power toboggan, winter sports vehicle for thousands of Canadians, has replaced the dogteam in northern communities.



A hundred years after its establishment, this sketch showed the H B C buildings at Cumberland House.

CUMBERLAND HOUSE



This little square structure, photographed forty years ago, was the powder magazine.

SAMUEL HEARNE and nine men left York Factory on Hudson Bay in five canoes on 23 June 1774 to erect a new fort inland. Their food consisted of 12 lb. of Bisquett's as Hearne planned on living off the land. It was not until September 3rd that they found a suitable location. This was a fine bay on Pine Island in the Saskatchewan River, near the present Saskatchewan-Manitoba border, and the men started to clear a level area on which to build a log tent.

The winter was spent trading a few furs, setting nets in the lake, and shooting game. In April work was begun on the new fort—to be called Cumberland House—and on 30 May Hearne left with the furs for York Factory.

Cumberland House was the first western inland trading post of the Company, and it was built to meet the competition of traders who came chiefly from Montreal. Five years later these traders would form the beginning of the North West Company.

Under such resourceful Company men as Matthew Cocking and William Tomison, despite competition, war, and smallpox, trade increased at Cumberland House in the 18th century.

Captain John Franklin, R.N., stopped at the fort in November 1819 on his first trip to the Arctic coast, and Dr John Richardson and Robert Hood of the Franklin party spent the

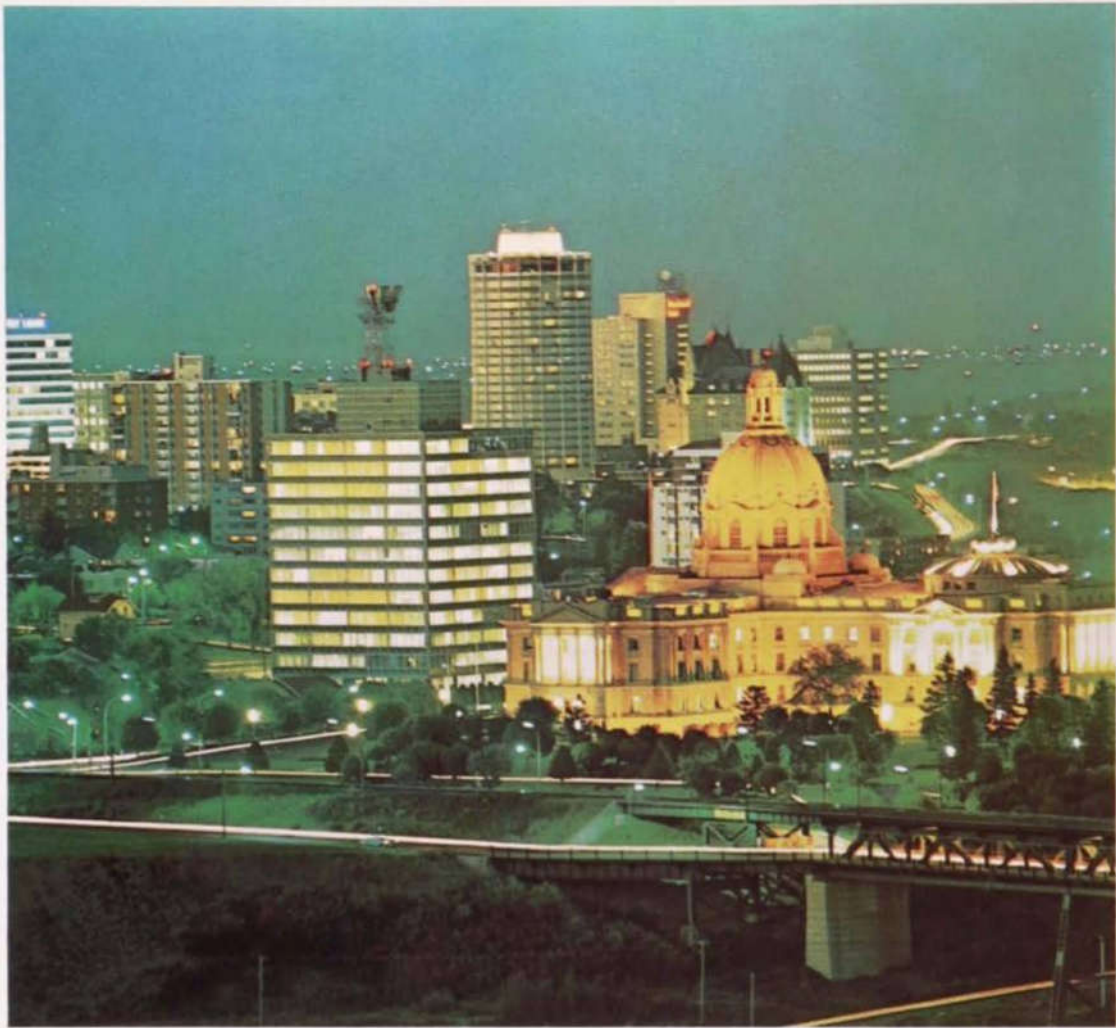
winter at Cumberland House surveying and studying the human, animal and plant life of the region.

In 1825 Cumberland House was described as being 'large and tolerably well built, with a handsome dwelling house, having glass windows, and what is still more uncommon in those parts, a gallery in front . . . A neat kitchen-garden, which furnishes an ample supply of vegetables adorns the place . . .'

From about 1830 Cumberland House was overshadowed by Norway House and the gateway to the great 'Up Country' of the Saskatchewan declined in importance.

Today in addition to trapping there is a government experimental farm where the Indians are encouraged to grow crops and produce livestock. There are also missions, schools and a hospital to serve the 1,000 people.

The H B C manager's house is still located on a small knoll facing Cumberland Lake not far from Hearne's original fort, but in 1966 a modern store was built in the village about half a mile away. The young Indian boys in blue jeans and black cowboy hats play around the store while mini-skirted young girls, accompanied by more sedately dressed mothers and grandmothers shop for their fresh bread, meat, and fruit, transistor radios and records, and all the other amenities which are now found in a small northern community.



GEORGE HUNTER

*Still a young city, Edmonton grew
by leaps and bounds after the
discovery of oil nearby.*

EDMONTON



GLENFOW FOUNDATION

Inside the palisades a Montreal Battalion established headquarters in 1885. The gold rush of '98 brought prospectors to be outfitted; this party camped below the Big House, where the factor lived, now the site of the Legislative Building.



BROWN COLLN. ALBERTA ARCHIVES

IT was a cloudy cool November in 1795 when William Tomison of the Hudson's Bay Company and his men erected the stockades around Edmonton House, later to be called Fort Edmonton. The fort was located at the junction of the Saskatchewan and Sturgeon Rivers, and during the first decade of the 19th century it was moved up the Saskatchewan River to the present site of Edmonton.

Inside the stockade was a cluster of buildings including a blacksmith shop, carpenter shop, cooperage, and quarters for a gunsmith and a tailor. Winter was the busy season at all the shops. The boat builders constructed the York boats in preparation for

shipping furs down the Saskatchewan in the spring, and the tailor was busy making heavy clothing.

For the first seventy-five years of its existence Fort Edmonton was the centre for traders, missionaries and travellers going up and down the North Saskatchewan.

In 1874 the North West Mounted Police arrived, in 1885 soldiers were stationed in the Fort, and in 1891 the railroad reached Edmonton. The following year the daughter of the United States Consul in Winnipeg, Miss Elizabeth Taylor, visited Edmonton. 'This little place is beautifully situated on the high banks of the Northern Saskatchewan,' she wrote,

'one of the finest sites I have ever seen ... on the whole the most liveable place I have seen in the northwest or west.'

To serve the settlement that was growing up outside the fort, the Company built its first 'saleshop' in 1890. Fifteen years later a new three-storey modern brick store was opened. With its elevators, large mirrors, and other innovations, it was a source of great amazement to the visiting Indians and their families who gathered at the store at Treaty time to make their purchases.

In the same year that the Company opened its new store—1905—Alberta became a province with Edmonton the capital. On 13 February 1947, twenty miles southwest of Edmonton, the Number One oil well at Leduc flung black smoke into the wintry sky, ushering in the province's oil era. Leduc turned out to be a field containing an estimated two hundred million barrels of recoverable oil.

Today Edmonton is a transportation and distribution centre; and 44 per cent of all manufactured goods in Alberta originate in the Metropolitan area. The city is surrounded by crude oil and natural gas fields. It has 865 industrial plants, new office buildings and attractive hotels.



GEORGE HUNTER

*Stores and offices conceal what
was the portage trail but the Red
River still winds its way north.*



'A Gentleman on the spot' in 1824 depicted the Governor of Red River driving his family in a cariole.

Below: In 1881 the Company moved from old Fort Garry to this impressive department store which served the city until 1926.

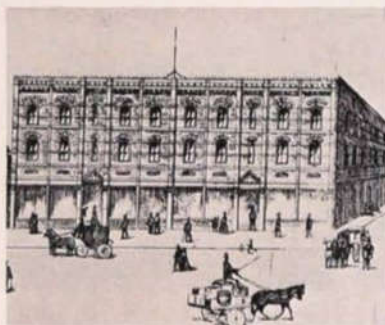
WINNIPEG

ON 15 JULY 1970 Manitoba celebrates its 100th birthday, and the Hudson's Bay Company has a unique interest in the occasion.

Two rivers, the Red and Assiniboine, converge in Winnipeg, the capital, and here at their confluence the first agricultural settlement in Western Canada was established. It was initiated by Lord Selkirk and encouraged by the Company.

The settlers arrived in 1812 and in May of the following year Hugh Heney was at the Forks 'Building a house and planting potatoes' for the Hudson's Bay Company. In about 1810 the North West Company had also established Fort Gibraltar where 'the beautiful confluence of the Assiniboine and Red River washed the base of the bluff'. After the amalgamation in 1821 this fort was renamed Fort Garry in honour of Nicholas Garry, a member of the London Committee, who visited the settlement in that same year.

In 1835 a second Fort Garry was built, and for thirty-five years this stone-walled fort was the centre of activity in a settlement busy with the



outfitting of boat brigades, the buffalo hunt, experimental agriculture, and the comings and goings of the colonists, canoe men, freighters, hunters, and sportsmen.

Dramatic changes were witnessed at Fort Garry in the 1860s: It became the headquarters of Rupert's Land, the steamboat arrived on the Red River, postal service was extended, and a weekly newspaper was published.

In 1869 the Company agreed to surrender its Chartered Territory and the following year Manitoba joined the confederation of Canada.

Three years later Winnipeg was incorporated as a city with a population of 1,869 people. The formation of the province opened the West to settlement and the population of Winnipeg increased from fewer than 20,000 in 1884 to approximately 203,000 thirty years later.

Today Winnipeg is the largest manufacturing and distributing centre in the Prairie Provinces. It is known for its theatrical and musical accomplishments and its internationally acclaimed Royal Winnipeg Ballet, all of which bear witness to the artistry of its people.

On what was once called the Portage Trail the Company now has a large department store and parkade covering a city block and within Greater Winnipeg there are also wholesale and raw fur branches and a distribution centre for Northern Stores. The Canadian Headquarters is at Hudson's Bay House on Main Street. This building occupies part of the famous Fort Garry site near the junction of the two rivers where the city—which now has a population of over half a million—had its beginning.



MONTREAL TOURIST BUREAU

Between Mount Royal and the St Lawrence tower the exciting architectural developments of the last decades.



In 1807 there were fields between the Mountain and the St Lawrence where lies St Helen's Island, enlarged in 1967 to accommodate the 'Man and his World' Exposition. Between those times the city earned the disapproval of George Simpson.



aded and called Ville Marie de Montréal. In the seventies and eighties large numbers of colonists were brought out from France and by 1697 there were 200 'good strong houses in Montreal'. At the beginning of the 18th century there were a fair number of houses in the direction of Lachine, part of the westward expansion to avoid the Lachine rapids. During the American Revolution United Empire Loyalists streamed North and mingled with the many Highland Scots in Montreal. This growing diversity of race and temperament was soon apparent in the business life of the city.

For fifty years these 'pedlars' from Montreal, who later joined to form

The following year Governor George Simpson decided that the Company's interests should be maintained in Lachine, today part of Metropolitan Montreal, as the latter place was 'A sink of dissipation and extravagance'. In 1833 the Company bought property in Lachine which was to become known as Hudson's Bay House and it was from here that Governor Simpson administered his fur trade empire until his death in September 1860.

One hundred years later the Company purchased the Henry Morgan Company in Montreal which had five stores in the city. This was the largest capital investment in the Company's history. Montreal is also the location of the largest of the Company's buying offices, and last year a new merchandise distribution centre was completed to serve Northern Stores in Quebec and across the country. The Company's Montreal fur auction is now Canada's largest, and it contributes substantially towards making Montreal Canada's leading fur marketing centre.

With a metropolitan population of 2,500,000 Montreal is Canada's largest city. To Canadians it means 'Man and His World', Place Ville Marie, Place Bonaventure, Notre Dame de Bonsecours, St. James Street and the famous hockey team 'Montréal Canadiens'. It has a vigorous and artistic life. 'No city can truly call itself a metropolis unless its cultural development keeps pace with—indeed surpasses—its growth in stone and steel, its population and industry.' This is Montreal.

MONTREAL

JACQUES CARTIER in October 1535 visited a fortified Iroquoian village on an island in the St Lawrence River—the site of the present city of Montreal. He was given a joyous reception by more than 1,000 Indians. There were fires and feasting and Cartier read the Gospel according to St John.

It was not until 1642 that Paul de Chomedey, Sieur de Maisonneuve arrived to lay the foundation of a permanent settlement. It was stock-

the North West Company, harassed the Hudson's Bay Company.

As the Company's supply route was via Hudson Bay, and Montreal was outside the jurisdiction of Rupert's Land, it was not until 1814 that the Company had a representative in the settlement. After the amalgamation in 1821 the Company continued to use the canoe route from Lachine westward and in 1831 the Company property there was in 'a dilapidated State'.



VICTORIA VISITORS BUREAU

Old and new are linked in City Hall beyond the fountain in Centennial Square.



During gold rush days the harbour was thronged with shipping as thousands of prospectors en route to the Fraser poured in. In the 1860s the Fort was demolished, beginning with the stockade and the bastion on Government Street.

B.C. ARCHIVES



VICTORIA

'THE PLACE ITSELF' appears a perfect "Eden" in the midst of the dreary wilderness of the North west coast,' James Douglas wrote in 1843, shortly after selecting a site for the Hudson's Bay Company's new depot on Vancouver Island. The establishment was called Fort Victoria and it was a quadrangle of 300 feet square.

The boundary dispute between the United States and Great Britain was settled in 1846 and it was evident that the Company's operations south of the 49th parallel would soon end. The year of great changes was 1849. The headquarters of the Company's Columbia District was moved from

Fort Vancouver in present-day Washington State to Fort Victoria. In the same year Vancouver Island was granted to the H B C for purposes of settlement. The estimated population at that time was 450. In 1851 James Douglas was appointed Governor of the Crown Colony of Vancouver Island.

Agriculture was the principal industry of the infant colony, and the Company had several large farms and a sawmill. In 1858 the Fraser River gold rush caused an upheaval in the tranquil life of the 700 people at Fort Victoria. Overnight the population increased by several thousands. Al-

though the gold rush was on the mainland, most of the people came by sea and landed at Victoria or Esquimalt.

In 1860 the Company built a new brick store and warehouse and four years later most of the Fort buildings had disappeared.

The Crown colonies of British Columbia and Vancouver Island were united in 1866 and two years later Victoria became the official capital.

Today Greater Victoria includes the communities of Oak Bay, Esquimalt and Saanich. The population of 172,000 is served by the Bay's five-storey department store which includes such services as interior design, a garden shop, a carousel snack bar, a made-to-measure men's shop, a hall for gatherings and exhibitions, and a car parkade.

Victoria, with its stately buildings, its beautiful floral displays, its nautical atmosphere and magnificent climate is one of Canada's most charming cities.



ARNAUD MAGG

Children who not long ago would have lived in caribou-skin tents now call gaily painted wooden houses home.



The settlement in 1930 was a sprinkling of houses perched by an arctic sea that is frozen the greater part of the year. When it thaws and the ship can get through, the annual supplies are piled on the beach.



July, Hearne noted 'By the time I had completed this survey, it was about one in the morning of the eighteenth; but in those high latitudes . . . the Sun is always at a good height above the horizon'. On his return journey Hearne spent some time in the Great Slave Lake area and arrived back at Fort Prince of Wales in June 1772. He did not find the copper but he did gain immortality for being the first European to travel overland to the Arctic Ocean.

In the early 1920s the Company began to set up fur trading posts in the Western Arctic and Fort Hearne, later to be called Coppermine, was established in 1928. In 1962 the Company doubled the selling space of its store and refitted it for modern self-service for the local population of 700. One of the main sources of revenue in the settlement is the trade in fox and seal skins.

In 1967 a great search for copper got under way in the area when an extensive prospecting, geological mapping, and diamond drilling program was carried out. There are many problems to overcome before full scale mining becomes a reality in the Coppermine valley. However, with developments in sea transportation the earth's secrets—which eluded Hearne—may justify a commercial exploitation.

An all-weather airport, which will greatly help in the administration of the government services at Coppermine, will be completed in 1970.

COPPERMINE

THIS WESTERN ARCTIC settlement is situated near the mouth of the Coppermine River, which is approximately 525 miles long and empties into Coronation Gulf.

Early in the 18th century Hudson's Bay Company men knew that the Northern Indians had access to a remarkably pure copper. In 1768 they brought samples of copper to Fort Prince of Wales on Hudson Bay and 'a rude sketch, drawn with charcoal

on a deer's skin, of a map of the country to the northward of Churchill'.

The young and intelligent Samuel Hearne was chosen to find the copper mine. On his third attempt, he left the Fort in December 1770 with the remarkable Chipewyan chief Matonabee, his wives, and an all-Indian party. After travelling westward over the barrens they descended the Coppermine River. At the mouth of the river, which was reached on 17



GEORGE HUNTER

Between Legislative Building and oil refinery on the edge of the plain are Wascana Lake and growing city.



TORONTO LIBRARY BOARD

The camp is set up outside the riding school of the North West Mounted Police; Regina was headquarters for the force until 1920. The local newspaper in 1885 was two years old.



SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES

THE CREE INDIANS called the area *Oshunah-Kasas-Take* which means 'The Place of the Pile of Bones'. Buffalo, whose bones they were, no longer roam where this 'Queen City of the Plains' now stands. In 1882 the new townsite, selected as a future capital and headquarters for the North West Mounted Police, was given the more dignified name of Regina, in honour of Queen Victoria. The first passenger train arrived in that year but newspaper reporters were not impressed: 'The place is no more fitted for a town site than any other flat, dry, barren section of the line of railway,' said the *Manitoba Free Press*. And a *Forest and Stream* editor commented: 'I have never in all my travels seen so wretched a site for a town'. In 1883 Regina was confirmed as the capital of the Northwest Territories. Twenty years later it was incorporated as a

REGINA

city and in 1906, one year after Saskatchewan became a province, it was named the provincial capital.

On Sunday, 30 June 1912, a tornado swept north of the city and in a matter of minutes twenty-eight people were killed, two hundred were injured, twenty-five hundred were homeless, and the property damage amounted to about four million dollars.

The world-wide depression of the 1930s struck Saskatchewan with savage severity. Between 1929 and 1933 the per capita wealth in the province fell by approximately one-third, and crop failures, droughts, and grasshopper infestations caused widespread suffering. Because of the economic situation the Hudson's Bay Company's plans for a department store in Regina were postponed.

During the Second World War Regina was an intensive training centre for armed forces and, in the post-war period, potash and good crops have brought prosperity. In addition to these commodities, its industries include meat packing, oil refineries, and the manufacture of steel pipe and agricultural equipment.

The impressive Saskatchewan Legislative Building stands on the south bank of Wascana Lake. The lake, created from Pile of Bones Creek, is the focal point of a project called Wascana Centre. Financed by the province, city, and University of Saskatchewan, it is a multi-million dollar development of public buildings, parks and recreation areas on a 1,600-acre site in the heart of the city.

In 1968 the Company opened its first store in the city at a cost of six million dollars. Like all Company department stores, the new Regina one has a parkade, which includes a snow silo into which snow is dumped and melted for sewer runoff, eliminating the need to truck it away.

The tent town of the 1880s is today a city of over 140,000 people. The urban mud is hidden under asphalt and the car and truck have replaced the cart and buckboard on the highways. Regina has come of age.

SEVERN HOUSE 1770

BY JOHN MACFIE

Photographs, except where credited, are by the author, who is Senior Conservation Officer with the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests and a studious historian.

BY 1770, one hundred years after the founding of the Hudson's Bay Company, the Severn River had already accumulated a considerable history of fur-trading. Rising east of Lake Winnipeg and draining the Precambrian Shield country of extreme northwestern Ontario through a trench cut in the flat surface of the Hudson Bay lowland to the sea some 200 miles east of York Factory, it served as an alternative to the Nelson River as an avenue to the plains, and was the natural outlet for the furs of a large sector of the hinterland. The 25,000 square mile region embraced by the Severn and its tributaries is one of the least developed in forested Canada. No roads penetrate it, and settlement is limited to half a dozen scattered Cree and Ojibwa villages. Viewed from the air (and in the tea pail) the Severn is clay-coloured, a property it acquires in its upper extremities at Sandy and Sachigo Lakes, remnants of glacial Lake Agassiz, and carries all the way to the Bay only slightly diluted by contributions of clear water from the Windigo and Fawn Rivers.

The people found there by the first fur-traders to probe the region, and whose descendants still hunt and trap the lower *Wascho Sepe* as they call their river, were the Swampy Crees or *Muskegouk*, northerly representatives of the Algonkian speaking tribes of the eastern woodlands. They lived by hunting for caribou, waterfowl, beaver, ptarmigan and grouse, and fishing for trout, whitefish, suckers and sturgeon. Seasonal migrations of considerable extent would be necessary to keep always within reach of one or more of these food sources. When Governor Charles Bayly, the first member of the Hudson's Bay Company to leave a written record of the Indians of 'New Severn River', visited it in 1674 it is probable he found them hunting the teeming waterfowl of the coastal marshes. Bayly observed they were 'as poor as Eiskemos' and had no beaver to trade.

A move to place a trading post at the mouth of the Severn was made by the Company as early as 1680 when, with the object of beating expected 'interlopers' to the site, Captain Draper, in command of the *Albemarle*, was outfitted in England with lumber, nails, bricks, carpenters' tools and trade goods and ordered to call there on his way to James Bay and erect a small house if he deemed it feasible. Draper's instructions carried the

warning that the natives of Hudson Bay were more 'rude and barbarous' than those of James Bay. Had this proposed venture been carried out Severn River would have boasted the earliest Company post on Hudson Bay proper. Instead, that honour fell to Nelson River two years later.

The Company continued to urge the staking of a claim on the Severn, but at first harassment by the French interfered. Finally, Churchill Fort (one of several names to be applied to Severn during its long and intermittent history) came into being in or about 1685, with Samuel Missenden as chief and Thomas Walsh as trader. It was one of the first white settlements in Ontario and it remains, as Fort Severn, the northernmost community in the province.

Churchill Fort quickly attained a position of importance, partly by default, for in 1686 the James Bay posts fell to the French, leaving it and Port Nelson the sole providers of fur to the Company for the next seven years. Between them, they despatched on the order of 20,000 pelts annually to London.

Severn's trade was so brisk in 1689 that Thomas Walsh, now 'Cheefe at New Severne', was awarded a gratuity of fifty pounds the following year. Ironically, Walsh put the torch to his profitable fort only months later rather than see it fall intact into the hands of the French. In September of 1690 a French fleet commanded by Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville, temporarily thwarted in

Modern HBC buildings on the bank high above the river.





In the Severn store, fifteen years ago.

its attempt to capture Port Nelson (York Fort), turned east and sailed on the lesser post at Severn River. Walsh, warned in advance by an Indian boy sent from Port Nelson, blew up and burned the place. He and his men trekked overland to Port Nelson on the Hayes River (not as difficult a trip as might be imagined, for stranded beach lines grooved by caribou trails form a continuous series of straight, level footpaths, and the rivers can be forded with little difficulty) and thus ended the first trading venture at the mouth of the Severn.

The French held the balance of power on the Bay until 1713, when the Treaty of Utrecht returned all the posts then held by them to the Company. One of these was the remains of Fort Phéliepeaux on the Severn, which had existed from 1700 until starving Indians pillaged it in 1712, but it was not reactivated. Half a century was to pass before trading resumed.

Renewed fears of French intrusion, partly fostered by Indians who disliked having to travel the considerable extra distance to York Factory to trade, eventually induced the Company to re-settle Severn. This time encroachment was from inland rather than the sea, traders from the St Lawrence having by 1750 penetrated well down the rivers leading to the Bay. James Isham, Chief Factor at York, at first thought in terms of an upriver post similar to Henley House, erected up the Albany River a few years earlier as tangible evidence of the Company's claim to Rupert's Land, but exploration revealed that the Severn did not compare with the Albany as an artery to the interior. So in 1759, just at the close of the French era in Canada that caused a temporary withering of competition from inland traders, the Governor and Committee in London consented to the erection of a house staffed with ten men, at the river mouth, and James Fort came into being. The following year it conducted a creditable trade of 2,461 made beaver, and soon Fort Albany far down in James Bay detected a diversion to the north of part of the business that it



Hunting ptarmigan on the coastal tundra.

formerly drew from the upper reaches of the Albany. In 1761 the Governor and Committee decreed that the place was to be called Severn House. Now known to the Company simply as Severn (the tiny settlement bears the more colourful designation Fort Severn) it remains today a remote outpost of the Hudson's Bay Company's still far-flung trading organization.

The year 1770 holds no special significance in the history of this post. A small subsidiary establishment with ten full years of existence behind it, a lesser cog in a large corporation enjoying its last easy years of trading at the seaside before a forced march inland to come to grips with new and more vigorous competition from now British Canada, routine prevailed as it did elsewhere on the Bay. It was, however, the first centennial of the Hudson's Bay Company, and although the event seems to have passed unnoticed, it is interesting to examine the daily affairs of a lesser known post in that year. This account is derived from the journals of John Garbut and Andrew Graham, post masters there in 1770, and is published by permission of the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company.

In recognition of New Year's Day, 1770, John Garbut 'Saluted the House as usual', adding in his journal entry for the day that his men were 'at harmles mirth'. Just being allowed to stay indoors would be cause for joy among the men, for it was a typical winter's day on the south shore of Hudson Bay: 'Clear Sharp Weather' with a northwest wind blowing. An unbroken expanse of tundra and marsh veneered with wind-hammered snow lay to the northwest of the settlement which was presumably situated on or very near the present post high on the left bank of the river at the treeline four miles from the Bay. In a wind from that quarter mirth could not prevail more than a few feet from a roaring fireplace. A cold and, due to a scarcity of ptarmigan, sometimes hungry winter faced the men of the fort, so they cannot be begrudged this rare Monday's idleness.



Cutting firewood.

Garbut had arrived from York Fort with the sloop *Severn* on the previous September 12th. The cargo of provisions and trade goods was unloaded, and the *Severn* laid up for the winter in a creek below the fort. Geese were shot and salted down, and debt was issued to Indians. Life then settled into the daily round of chores essential to existence in a harsh environment during the long months of waiting for early summer and the fur-trading season. Now it was January, days were lengthening just perceptibly, and the snow had set to a hardness that made it easier to venture abroad.

The first week of the new year was devoted largely to cutting and carrying wood for the hungry fireplaces, and grinding oatmeal. These and other 'Necessari Jobs' about the fort seem, logically enough, to have been reserved for very cold days and those when gale driven snow made travel impossible. Firewood was gathered in log lengths during summer, on silt-capped islands and flood plains upriver where white spruces grow to sixteen inches on the stump, or from tide and current concentrated masses of driftwood on the coast. Today much time and energy must still be devoted to keeping warm at *Severn*. In front of each Indian home stands a wigwam-shaped tower of drying spruce logs from which firewood is cut as needed. In 1770 a practical crosscut saw was still a century in the future, so cutting wood meant chopping it with the awkward axes of the day whose full weight hung on the underside of the handle. The woodcutters must have been warmer than the people inside the draughty fort.

The spectacularly fluctuating cycle of the willow ptarmigan, which saw winters of abundance followed by several of relative scarcity, affected the lives of the

traders at *Severn* as at all other Bayside settlements. The flesh of these birds, though dark and tough, was fresh and much preferred to salted geese and beef. 'Partridge' hunting occupied two or three men almost daily that winter. Although the number taken seems substantial enough, Garbut judged it to be a poor hunt.

The preferred method of taking ptarmigan was by netting, which under the right circumstances yielded many birds at little expense. The technique was that still used by the Swampy Crees, wherein a flock is lured with gravel sprinkled on the snow under a canopy of fine netting, which is then dropped over them. Ptarmigan eat willow buds in winter, and in a good ptarmigan year substantial numbers could be taken as they moved along the willow fringed river bank in front of the post, but in 1770 hunters had to work hard for them. The net produced only sporadically in January. Gunners were afield when weather permitted, bagging between 25 and 30 birds on the most successful days. On 2 February a net was put down among the willow thickets of 'the Great Island', the five square mile delta of the *Severn* which today carries the appropriate designation Partridge Island, and on 7 February it produced an outstanding catch of 100 ptarmigan. But in the long run it failed to meet the demand and on the 23rd Garbut wrote 'Partridge so wild forced to Shut them', requiring an expenditure of precious powder and shot. Shooting and netting improved briefly in early March, and again in April. Between April 1st and 23rd a total of 329 ptarmigan were brought to the fort. This seems a lot, but it amounted at best to one and a half not too meaty birds a day for each man, and these were meat-hungry men.

Aside from ptarmigan and a few rabbits, little fresh meat was to be had during the winter. The small bands of woodland caribou of the region would be wintering in the forest beyond the reach of the settlement's hunters. Not until 19 March, when Indians coming to trade brought 'some Deers meat', does any reference to caribou appear in the journal. A little more was traded near the end of winter. Moose, which now populate the region in numbers, did not then occur so far north in Ontario.

Salted geese put up in casks during the fall hunt, perhaps supplemented by a little beef or pork from York Fort, were the main provender at *Severn* that winter. To render these briny victuals edible a hole was chopped in the river ice (already more than four feet thick by the end of January), the frost was brushed from the meat and it was then suspended in the water from a pole placed across the hole for a time to 'freshen'. An Indian appearing from the forest with the fresh red meat of a caribou to trade would be in a position to drive a hard bargain.

References to the grinding of oatmeal and the brewing of 'small beer' are the only other clues to winter table fare revealed in Garbut's journal. Sturgeon and whitefish, which were taken with hooks or nets set under the ice at certain other posts at that time, do not seem to have been exploited at *Severn* that year.

Severn House's main source of furs lay far in the interior, but the opportunity to supplement it with local pelts was not neglected. In the dead of winter there was less work to be done about the post, so spare hands were sent to trap nearby and from outlying camps. On 24 January John Stephenson and his partners returned to the fort for provisions, bringing a few marten, and on 10 February Thomas Catley and partners came in and reported little stirring on their trapline. Of the forest animals only marten seem to have been taken. A couple of decades ago marten hovered on the brink of extinction in Ontario, one of the few surviving pockets being one hundred miles west of Severn near the Manitoba border, but in recent years they have recovered remarkably. When plentiful, as they must have been in 1770, this easily captured land-dwelling member of the weasel family could be taken much more readily in deadfall sets than, say, the more valuable otter of the region. In today's fur markets a wild mink pelt is worth twice that of a marten, and the best of all Ontario mink come from Severn, yet this animal seems to have been ignored there in 1770, as it was throughout Rupert's Land. As for beaver, the mainstay of the Canadian fur trade throughout its existence and now commonly found in the streams of the great muskeg, it must have then been at the bottom of the cycle of abundance, for none appear to have been pelted by post hunters or local Indians during the winter.

Two methods were used to catch the arctic foxes that inhabit the coastal barrens and, in winter, the ice in the vicinity of the steaming tidal fracture zone where sea life might be scavenged. Fort hunters made deadfall traps in which the crushing force was supplied by a block of ice, and they put out set guns. According to James Isham, who reported in detail on the customs of the country during his tenure in charge at York Fort in the 1740s, the

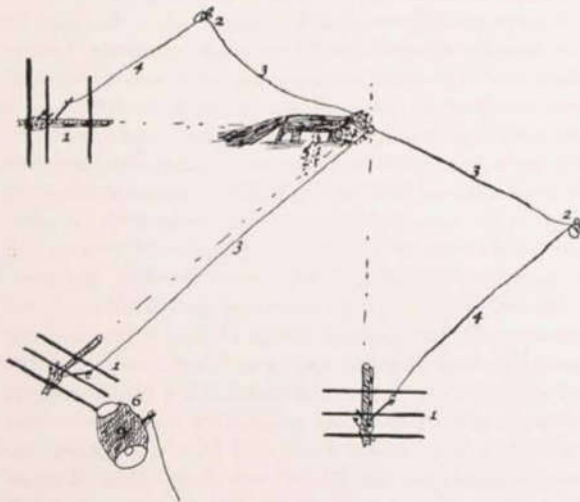


Shooting ptarmigan.

latter strategy was effective, if a little risky for the user. The loaded and cocked gun was triggered by the fox when it tugged at a bait attached to a thirty foot cord set in a shallow trench that placed the fox in the line of fire. For 'shy vermin', two or three set guns were trained on the bait. Some foxes fell to the guns in February but the best day seems to have been 19 March when twelve were taken by guns and traps. Isham reported steel traps in use for foxes at York twenty years earlier but it is not revealed whether they were now in use at Severn.

It was an uneventful winter, with little to break the arduous routine of keeping warm and fed on that bleak coast. Communication with the outside world was limited to packets from Albany and York, received on 25 February and 25 April respectively. Occasionally a local Indian came in to trade furs and settle his debt. Evidently some Indians were settled in the environs of the fort, the nucleus of the present village of 150 Crees. Andrew Graham, Chief at Severn in 1770-71, and who later was to write on the country and its inhabitants, described these 'home Indians' who remained about the Bay posts as the remnants of a population which had largely moved inland to pursue the occupation of fur-hunting, or for other reasons. On 13 March Garbut reported '... an Indian Woman Dyed in the Night She having been Long Lame & Sick'.

'Divine Service' was held each Sunday, and on 23 April, St George's Day, the men 'Exercised Small arms' and colours flew over the fort 'in Honour to the Day'. It was not strictly a holiday for the men, and all the shooting was not for frivolous purposes, as Garbut added '...'



James Isham drew this diagram of a triangle of set guns lashed to upright stakes, locks protected by hoods, with 'vermin' taking the bait; there were also pistols set in casks.

H. C. ARCHIVES



Some artifacts from the site of Severn House, retrieved from the crumbling river bank. In centre, copper kettle lid and round iron-made nails, hook, axe-heads, hinges, chisel, gun parts, measuring cup, pestle, bottle top, pitchfork, razor blade.

took up the Partridge Nets kild 90 with Guns for they would not drive to the Nets'. To these particular Englishmen St George's Day stood for the end of a winter of bitter, dry ptarmigan, for any day now the first fat goose of spring would ride a south wind down the river.

On May 1st the first goose was sighted and next day spring broke with a thawing wind cutting the snow. Garbut put men to work 'Clearing the Inner Works of Snow' and '3 Families of Indians Pitched down to the North marsh' to hunt. That day the first two geese of the season were brought to the fort. It was 2 May, 1770, one hundred years after Charles II granted a charter to the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay, but it is unlikely those two welcome geese figured in a celebration of the event.

The breakup of the river was and remains to this day an event looked forward to with both eagerness and anxiety at settlements on southern Hudson Bay and James Bay. In most years the ice goes out in orderly fashion, but when winters of deep snow are climaxed by rapid thawing dams of broken ice are likely to cause the rivers to severely undercut and even overflow their clay banks, which at Severn rise thirty feet above high tide level. Nervous excitement prevails from the moment thawing sets in.

Garbut began preparing for the event at the end of April when he sent four men to watch the sloop. Thereafter he recorded the progress of breakup like the advance of an invading force. On 6 May water flowed over the ice which was 'blown up in several places and the Ice risen about 5 or 6 foot'. On the 8th the channel north of Partridge Island remained unbroken, but the south channel was dammed from side to side. Next day the water fell nearly three feet, but on the 10th 'in the Night the Ice came down in a heavy body and stoped near the Sloop the Ice as high as the Bank abreast the House, the Sloop full of Water but very safe as yet'.

Two days later water continued to stand above the sloop's decks. Finally, on 16 May the river ran unimpeded to the sea, allowing close examination of the sloop which was found not only to be sunk but carrying a six foot load of ice on her decks. Being sunk, as it turned out, saved her from being driven on the mud flats, for the ice had cut her moorings. Garbut sent two men to clear the decks, but such a field of massive ice blocks surrounded the vessel that he feared it would be a month before she could move off. Even on 11 June the journal states 'the Shipwright and John Stephenson went to the Sloop the Old Jolly Boat Jam'd to peices by a peice of Ice falling on her'.

The journal reveals glimpses of daily spring and summer routine about the post, but with a frustrating lack of detail. Guns were mended and tailors were at work for trade, presumably making the woollen coats that had by now largely replaced the Indians' fur garments. Spruce timbers were squared for repairs or additions to the fort and boards were made with a pit saw, a stiff, heavy instrument that was pulled up by a man on top of a log and down by another stationed at the dirty end beneath the platform on which the log lay. Limestone was brought home to be burnt for mortar, probably from the glacier-torn fossiliferous beds that arch upward into the river bed to form the White Seal Rapids some 20 miles upstream.

They took the flagstaff down and 'put new Caps to it' and they 'Pickt Oakam' (frayed old ropes for caulking the sloop). Driftwood for next winter's fuel was towed in and carried up to the fort, though evidently not enough, for Andrew Graham was to complain in the autumn that too little had been laid in. On 18 June the garden was being dug, and on the 20th it was sown, most likely to the cabbages and turnips that grow so well in the rich silt soil of the settlement. There is a little patch of caraway growing wild at Severn, evidence that non-staples also were tried from time to time.

Early summer is not a particularly bountiful season on Hudson Bay. The spring goose hunt was disappointing but on 1 June, fifty geese were taken. These would be Canadas, which nest in the muskeg but also summer about the tidal flats. In early May a deer hedge was constructed to catch caribou, which traditionally move out of the forest to graze on lichen-encrusted beach lines paralleling the coast, foraging occasionally into the sea itself to feed on seaweed. Isham described the deer hedge as a fence of brush one or two miles long, with gaps in which snares of plaited hide or sinew were hung from upright poles. Caribou wandered or were chased into the hedge and snared as they tried to squeeze through the openings. If one escaped with a snare, sooner or later the drag pole became fouled on a tree, allowing the hedge tenders to catch and kill it. But the hedge was largely a failure that year, as only one small caribou is recorded as having been caught. A few were later secured from Indians, as were some caribou hides, a commodity that could be traded with Moose Fort for birch wood for making snowshoe frames and axe handles. The natural supply of birch at Severn is limited to rare finds of beaver-peeled logs that float down from the interior.

Severn House's existence through fall and seven months of winter was justified in barely more than two weeks, between 28 May and 13 June, when twenty-seven canoes of trading Indians arrived from up river with the furs from the various bands they represented. Although a few pelts, principally marten, were traded by local Indians prior to breakup, Severn's main business was with the people of the distant interior. How far the canoes came is not revealed in Garbut's terse journal entries, but the fort's logical sphere must have been considered to extend to Lake Winnipeg and beyond. In 1769 William Tomison ascended the Severn and crossed to Lake Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan River to spend the winter persuading Indians to bring furs to the Bay. He found that the rejuvenated Montreal trade was drawing their business and he returned, to York Fort, with only four canoes and 400 made beaver in pelts. Young Tomison, then developing as one of the new breed of inland travellers who inspired and led the Company's expansion into the interior, was to figure prominently in its history during the next thirty years.

Probably the majority of the twenty-seven canoes came from Cree and Saulteaux territory encompassed by the Severn and Albany watersheds. How much fur they brought Garbut neglected to record in his daily journal, but the following year's trade amounted to 5,400 made beaver, including 2,950 marten.

All that now remained to be done to complete the annual cycle at Severn was to transfer the fruits of the season's trading to York Fort in time to be put aboard the ship for London. Four men went down to get the sloop, and next day she was moored before the fort. She was beached at high tide to have her seams caulked, then returned to the water for rigging for the voyage to York.

On 23 July the inner beacon was set out and four days later seven men went out into the shallow estuary to find and mark the mouth of the narrow, boulder-flanked north channel.

Loading of the sloop was finished on the 28th. The houses were cleaned, firewood for the journey was cut and the men got their personal gear aboard. On the last day of the month Garbut 'Delivered the Charge of the House to John Hughes [the armourer] and Came on Board the Sloop to proceed to York Fort'. Departure from the shoal-ridden, exposed Severn River mouth, whether by canoe or modern motor vessel, calls for the correct combination of tide and wind. This treacherous and often foggy water has claimed both ships—most recently the Company vessels *York Fort* and *Neophyte*—and the lives of Company men. In 1785 two of Severn's men drowned while tending a fish net at the river mouth, and in 1964 the manager and clerk vanished into the sea when their outboard motor failed in an offshore wind. Seven days of waiting, which necessitated two excursions to the fort for more provisions, elapsed before the *Severn* got clear. Finally, on 14 August, the *Severn* House year's returns, and most of its men, reached York Fort on Hayes River, 200 miles away.

Three weeks and three days later the *Severn* anchored again at Severn House, bringing Andrew Graham as Master of the house for the new trading year. His presence at Severn noticeably fattened its daily journal during the latter part of 1770.*

Graham was also either an innovator or a lover of horses (one is led to suspect the latter by his habit of referring to it as 'my' horse), for he brought a horse to Severn that fall. The ox, which worked in snow, withstood the cold, and tasted better than the horse, was the common draft animal at the Bay posts. A horse, on the other hand, could be ridden on the limited amount of firm ground available, and pull a sleigh, but Graham did not disclose whether he used it as a means of getting about. Anyway, the animal comes to light in the journal four days after it arrived, when Graham had 'men employed cutting grass for my horse'. Grass at Severn is inclined to be sedge of one kind or another, a rather coarse fodder. Some coastal dunes support a rye-like grass that polar bears summering on the beaches find to their liking, but the winter's supply of hay for the horse and the cattle Graham was expecting from Moose Fort came from marshes.

Laying in winter food for the human members of the settlement's population occupied much of the month or so that remained of autumn. Great flights of snow geese from the lower Arctic alight on the south coast of Hudson Bay about the first week in September to spend a month feeding on the turf of the coastal barrens before the long flight to their wintering grounds. Their arrival remains

* 'Andrew Graham's Observations on Hudson's Bay 1767-1791' are published in the current volume (XXVII) of the *Hudson's Bay Record Society*.

the high point in the year's events for Indians and non-Indians alike. Fort Severn's Crees now profit by their remarkable ability to call snows to the gun by guiding wealthy sportsmen who fly hundreds of miles for the excellent shooting, an industry that infuses ten thousand dollars annually into the local economy just when it is needed for winter outfitting.

But Graham and his men saw the geese only as providence-sent flesh which allowed them to winter in a largely improvident land. Geese were something to be bought from Indians and salted away to the limit of the available kegs. Hunting was already under way when the sloop returned to Severn. From the 12th to the end of September salting geese was a daily chore. The harvest then stood at 1,000 birds, a good hunt, Graham later acknowledged in a letter to York.

The first week in October, with 'Divers kinds of Geese and Ducks taking their flight southward' the hunt ended. Predictably, winter swept into the void with 'Wind W.N.W. and a fresh gale with severe freezing weather, the ice driving thick in the river altho' last night none to be seen'. On 9 October, with the simple statement 'Men took up the launch' Graham capitulated to advancing winter. Four days later the Severn was frozen fast.

Two or three caribou were got from Indian hunters that fall, but the deer hedge, operated until 11 October, was a total failure. Autumn, when whitefish run in the river and over flooded tidal flats, and sea run trout congregate in the streams, is the best fishing season at Severn. Catching whitefish on short gill-nets hung on stakes driven in the mud where they will be inundated at high tide (as the tide recedes fishermen and gulls vie for the catch) remains an important side activity to the Indian waterfowl hunt on the coast. Graham's men seined for these small 'tickomeg' before the river froze.

Then on 18 October two men set up a tent 'at the creeks' to fish and catch rabbits. Judging by the infrequency of their return trips the location must have been some distance from the fort, possibly at Goose Creek ten miles to the east or at any of a number of other brooks that rise in the muskeg and enter the sea along the coast. The fishery operated until the end of November, during which time the men returned at intervals of

Severn Crees.



Cleaning and drying a whitefish net.

one to two weeks bringing many 'fine trout & Jack'. 'Jack' meant pike, and the trout were brook trout. The fact that voracious pike and brook trout could (as they still can) be taken from the same streams is a measure of the trophy size of the latter. The fishermen also brought home ptarmigan and rabbits, and rabbit snares set out around the fort also produced steadily.

Fall was the off-season for fur-trading, business being limited to a flotilla of three canoes which arrived in September and returned to the interior immediately after their trading was done, no doubt being engaged in a race against freezeup. 'Trusting' Indians with necessities for the goose hunt and for winter trapping was a regular activity prior to 4 October when the 'Home-Natives went off to trap martins & gave them strict charge not to be indolent'. Graham arranged for an Indian boy to stay at the settlement to tend 'the house Martin-traps'. Early in November traps and guns were set for white foxes, and by mid-December six had been killed.

By mid-October the wood put up in early summer, which was supposed to see the fort through winter, had dwindled to the point where Graham had to send men to the woods to cut fuel for immediate use. Garbut's neglect gave gainful employment to Graham's horse. A sled was built for it to pull and on 3 November 'men cleared and beat a path for the horse to hawl firewood', which it did regularly for several weeks, with one or two pauses to draw in some hay for itself. The fact that the wood road had to be cleared suggests that the wood came from small spruces and tamaracks growing on the raised beaches that line the muskeg behind the settlement. Centuries of use of these slow-growing trees has now destroyed the nearby woods as a source of fuelwood of respectable size.





Travelling over the frozen muskeg.

Severn's sloop failed to return from Moose Fort before the river froze on October 13th. Five weeks is little enough time to sail to the bottom of the Bay and then return 500 miles against prevailing, often snow-laden winds, and Graham guessed correctly that William Falconer, the sloop's master, had chosen to winter at Moose. Just the same, he was bound to be nagged by fear that the little craft had met with misfortune, and on 29 October he dispatched his capable traveller William Tomison and a young Indian, Maccapan, to Albany to learn its whereabouts. Tomison carried letters to Humphrey Martin at Albany and to Garbut at Moose. Confident that the sloop lay at Moose, he urged Garbut to see that it sailed for Severn as soon as ice conditions permitted next summer, and reminded him to send some cattle from the Moose Fort herd, as well as some bolts for window shutters and a dozen 'middling sized Hatchets'.

Tomison reached Albany on 17 November and was back at Severn five days after Christmas with the news that all was well with the sloop. He carried a letter from Garbut explaining that Falconer had attempted to return, but abandoned the voyage after waiting out five days of north wind.

The only record of Tomison's 850-mile journey along the Hudson Bay coast, on foot in early winter, are brief journal entries to the effect that it began and ended. Tomison kept journals of his inland expeditions, but those were business trips. A daily record of progress and conditions encountered on a mere errand to a neighbouring post would be of no use to the Committee in London in its deliberations regarding prosecution of the fur trade. Almost certainly his path would be the hard snow of the coastal barrens, first east for 200 miles, across the tundra behind Cape Henrietta Maria, then a further 200 miles

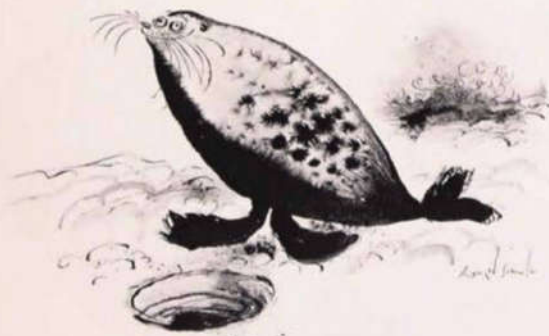
down James Bay to Albany. His nightly camps would be sheltered by the bushy spruce, twisted by wind and frost, that form the last ranks of the boreal forest. We are left to wonder if he might not after all have chosen a shorter bee-line course across the Great Muskeg, whether he and his Indian companion pulled a toboggan, the extent to which they relied on country food, what hardships beset them and a multitude of other details.

The failure of the sloop to return left Graham short of his expected winter complement of men. On 5 December he wrote 'We are few in number however I hope we shall do very well'. Later he concluded he actually had a surplus of help, 'an extra sailor which is an extra expence'. The non-arrival of his cattle may have been felt more keenly than the absence of the sloop's crew. Ferdinand Jacobs at York helped the meat situation a little when he sent down with the winter packet 'a joint of Beef and Veal' just in time for Christmas.

Guy Fawkes Day, the 5th of November, had been observed with 'Colours flying and a bone-fire in remembrance of the day'. Christmas day brought 'close warm weather'. Graham 'saluted the house as usual, and performed Divine Service', and Boxing Day found the men again 'at innocent mirth', the phrase used by all post masters of the day to describe whatever their men did to amuse themselves on rare holidays, which may have been inspired by something stronger than the daily round of 'small beer'. The year that had begun so cold ended pleasantly, for Severn basked in unseasonably mild weather from Christmas to New Year's. On 31 December Graham wrote '... continuance of warm pleasant weather; men cut firewood and rung out the old year'. So ended the first Centennial year at Severn. Soon that lonely outpost on Hudson Bay will ring out its third. ♦

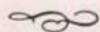
In which is offered a
Riddling Bestiary
or
Sequence of Beastly Riddles,
being an introduction
to the fur-bearing Creatures;
together with Notes
and a Dissertation on the Beaver.

Excerpts from 'The Great Fur Opera', a light-hearted history of the Company by Kildare Dobbs and Ronald Searle, including rhymes from the Bestiary, a moralizing treatise on beasts.



From chilly deeps I rise for air.
A warm reception waits me there,
A rendezvous that rends me quite.
I give him warmth and food and light.

Far from the North my name impresses
Who gave man meat and fire and dresses.



Me you'll quickly determine,
My name rhymes with vermin,
A bloodthirsty, vicious detestable crook.
I'm a slippery sneak
Seven days of the week
And believe me, I've pulled every trick in the book.
And if that's not sufficient to damn me to hell,
Twice a year I'm a cowardly turncoat as well.

Strange metamorphosis! Sublime translation!
With snowy death begins my transformation.
The wheel of Fate revolves. Behold the crook
Adorn the judge, the dowager, the duke.

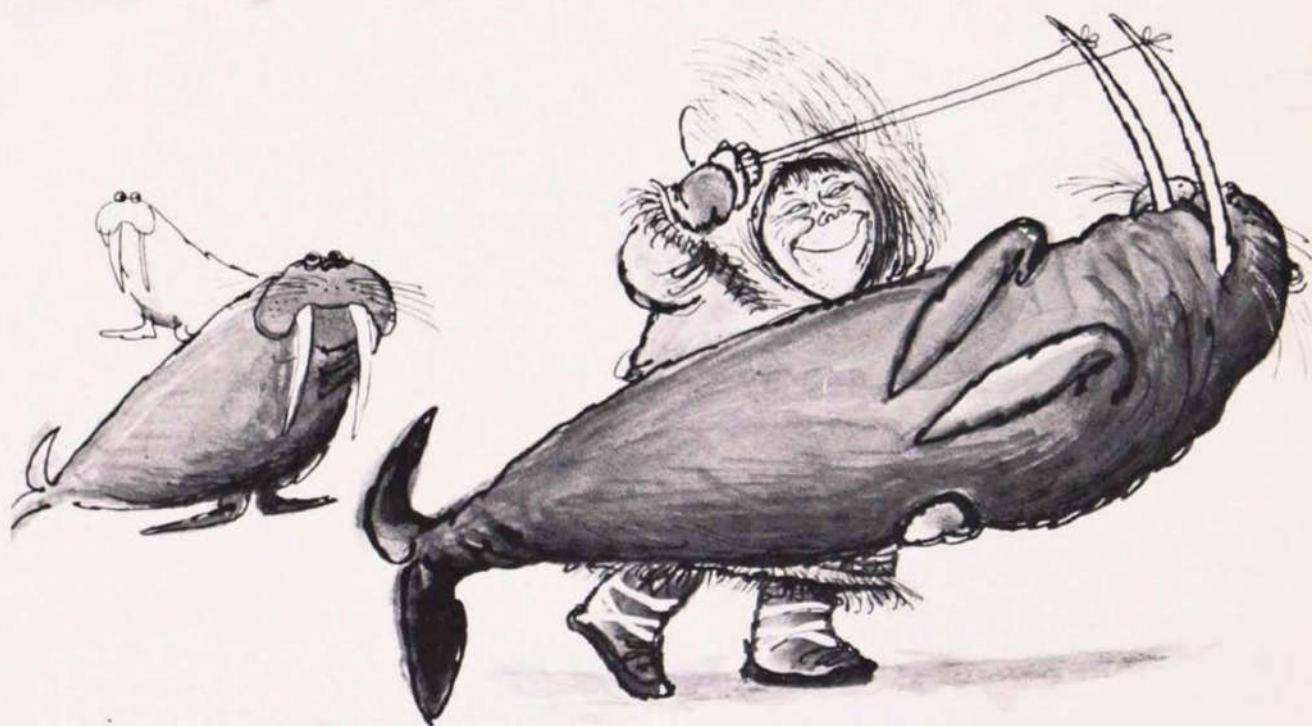
By mediaeval sumptuary laws, the use of ermine (taken always in winter, when the fur turns white) was restricted to the upper ranks of nobility. The savagery of this little animal is well known, resembling in small (as the Bestiarist puts it) 'that Serpent by whom fell our first Mother in Paradise garden'.

Thalarctos maritimus figures in Norse versions of the myth of Beauty and the Beast. The Bestiarist notes: 'This is that Monster of ye Boreal Region, North West toward Septentrion, who, though he swim in icy Waters, burneth with Rage. And by Lyeing on his Pelte, Maidens become right amorifick, and in this wanton Guise are pictured gallantly, for his Venerye is in his Haire'. Because of this fancied property, it has become necessary to protect the polar bear.

Pacing the margins of a floe,
To and fro, to and fro
I walk my rage
As in a cage
And sometimes eat an Eskimo.

Warm in my robe of horrid white,
I walk my rage all winter's night.
Fair game am I for cunning men
Whose fat I chew on now and then.

Beneath this beastly shape you see
A kind heart beats—the Real Me.
Once I'd a girl to keep me warm
And I threw off this hairy form.
She gave me a kiss and a loving hug
And kept me for a bedroom rug.





Ronald Searle



A nation is, because I am.
For Canada I give a dam
And think that I shall never see
A dinner lovely as a tree.

Busy with iv'ry chisels felling
Poplar and birch for food and dwelling,
I build; then under ice I dodge
And busy, labour in my lodge.

My coat for man a cov'ring makes
But that's not all the hunter takes:
His cruel knife cuts off my frolics—
And what is Castor without Pollux?

Gentle am I, to man a friend:
His gourmet dish my latter end.

A DISSERTATION ON BEAVER

NOTHING was more vital to Their Honours and their servants than the Beaver. It was their source of wealth, their medium of exchange, their heraldic device. The Indians, too, depended on it, as did the pedlars, paddlers, and colonists of New France. This mud-bound cousin of the rat, a by-word for mindless industry, was to become an Emblem of Canada itself.

'A traditional knowledge of the beaver,' says a Victorian authority, 'is the birthright of every Canadian.'

And not only of every Canadian, since the castor or beaver exists in two species, of which one is European and has been known since antiquity.

From earliest times the beaver was renowned for sagacity. His wise foresight in building dams and canals to provide his lodges with underwater approaches could only excite awe and admiration. But these achievements, amazing as they are, are not among those cited by Pliny the Elder as illustrating his cleverness.

What Pliny does report is more remarkable still: that the beaver, hunted for castoreum, a precious medicine contained in his testes, would tear them off (*cf.* English *castrate*) and leave them for his pursuers, escaping with what was yet more precious—his life. Thus the beaver became the Emblem of Prudent Sacrifice.

Castoreum was a nostrum for mental sickness. 'Castoreum for the brain,' as Sir Francis Bacon puts it. The author of *Castoris animalis naturam et usum medico-chemicum* (1685) recommends castoreum for earache, deafness, gout, and headaches, noting that it 'does much good to mad people. It destroys fleas, stops headaches and induces sleep.' Other parts of the beaver were of

great utility in colic, madness, spasms, epilepsy, apoplexy and lethargy.

Castoreum had other uses. In time it was found to be an irresistible bait for beaver traps. In 1673 a paper was published in London on 'The art of driving away and sinking Whales by Castoreum'.

But broadly speaking this essence of the prudent beaver was thought to confer a like prudence on its consumer. The principle is a familiar one in sympathetic magic. Nor can we ignore the significance of beaver-fur's coming into use as a material for hats—in effect, the external application of beaver to the brain.

The point—hitherto overlooked by scholars—is supported by a Jewish tradition that the use of a beaver hat was the secret of Solomon's wisdom. His prescription: 'To acquire a prodigious memory and never to forget what he had once read, it was only necessary to wear a hat of the beaver's skin, to rub the head and spine every month with that animal's oil, and to take, once a year, the weight of a gold crown-piece of castoreum.'

That the beaver's soft underfur or down is barbed in a way that makes it peculiarly well adapted for manufacturing felt is not, of course, to be overlooked. Yet felt is also used for making boots, and there is no record of beaver-felts being applied successfully in that way. On balance, it becomes clear that the beaver hat is magical in origin.

By the eighteenth century much information had been collected about the beaver. He had become widely known as a tireless woodcutter, the Emblem of Diligence.

Buffon, the great French naturalist, looked at him

carefully from the front and observed: 'If we consider the anterior parts, no animal is more perfectly adapted for terrestrial life.' Then, turning him round to inspect the other end, he added: 'And none so well equipped for an aquatic existence, if we look only at the posterior portions.'

From this viewpoint, it was also found that the wide, flat tail was a delicacy. In 1860, no less a visitor than the Earl of Southesk pronounced it palatable. He was only reluctant to name it, referring fastidiously to 'the last joints of a beaver's backbone'.

By the 1750's, when Malachy Postlethwayt was adapting his *Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce* from its French original, beaver science was far advanced. Beavers, he reported, fed only on fish. 'In the spring, all those of the same district, or quarter, gather together, and, walking two and two, they go in a body to hunt for animals of their own species; and all those they can catch they lead into their dens, where they make them work like slaves.' These, however, were Russian beavers.

Russian, too, were the felt-makers who knew a way to comb the undercoat of wool or down from a beaver-pelt without removing the long guard hairs. It was only necessary to remove the beaver.

Lacking this secret till the eighteenth century, English and French hatters at first preferred to buy their beaver in coat. Worn by Indians till it was ripe, *castor gras* or coat-beaver had already shed its guard-hairs. The soft underwool was ready for removal and use as felt. Trunk-covers and slippers were made from the skin.

'The process of hat-making,' observes wise Postlethwayt, 'may appear insipid to those who do not enter into the public utility of bringing every manufactured art to its last perfection.' The hatter first makes a cone of felt, then bashes it into shape.

Beaver hats stayed in fashion for long periods. More or less expensive, they were always durable. Fine beavers with furry nap were flaunted by the French. Worn smooth, they were stiffened with gum and sold to the Spanish. The *caballeros* in time passed them on to the Portuguese, who remade them in smaller sizes for sale in Brazil. Thence the thrifty Portuguese recovered them, full of holes, for sale in Africa.

British postmen were first uniformed in 1793, their issue hat a tall beaver. It lasted them till 1859.

But for elegant wear, the beaver was on its way out. John Hetherington had made his first top hat of plush or silk shag in 1798. By 1851, the year of London's Great Exhibition, English production of silk hats was booming at the rate of 250,000 a year.

The Committee was already planning a revolutionary new use for beaver. In 1843, Secretary Archibald Barclay had written a note about it: 'We have been trying some experiments on Beaver, with the view of testing the fitness of the article to be used as a fur. . . .'





The Shuswap

Text by E. S. ROGERS

Drawings by LEE UPDIKE

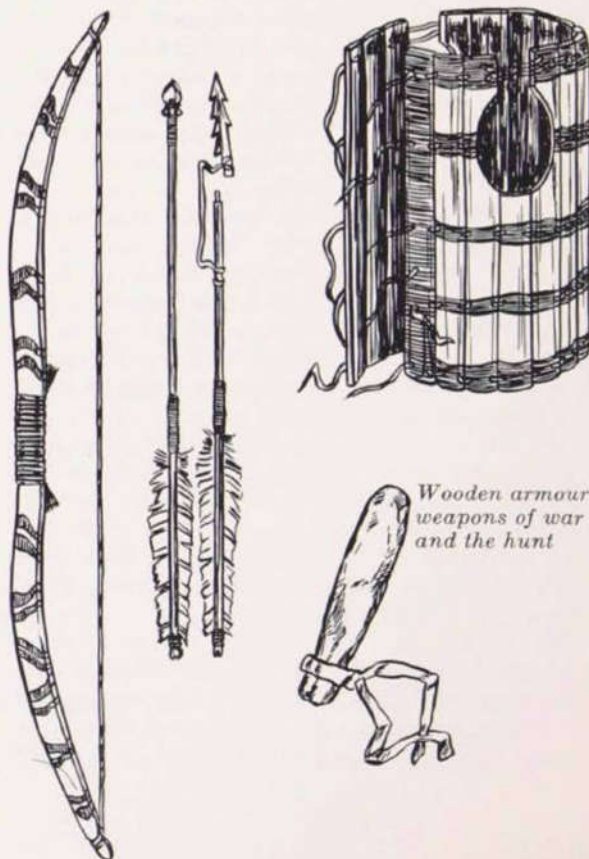
THE SHUSWAP lived, and many still do, in roughly what is today east-central British Columbia. The term 'Shuswap' is a corruption of *Suxwa'pmux*, the name they used for themselves. The Shuswap spoke Salishan, a language found in use by the Indians of southern British Columbia, northern Washington, Idaho and northwestern Montana. They consisted of thirty, perhaps more, bands, but these did not join together to form a unified tribal unit. There were elected chiefs for war, hunting and dances and one hereditary chief for each band. Chiefs had no special privileges but looked after the general welfare of the people and regulated the gathering of the food supply. War chiefs led parties sometimes of 100 to 200 men against their enemies. A shaman accompanied large numbers of warriors. Armour made of rods of wood or layers of elk skin was worn, shields afforded further protection and weapons consisted of bows and arrows, spears, knives and clubs.

When the Shuswap were first contacted by Europeans late in the 1700s, they are thought to have numbered about 5,300. About 1850, their numbers were estimated

to have been in the neighbourhood of 7,200 individuals. Then in 1862 and 1863 a severe epidemic of smallpox swept through the country decimating the population and in some instances wiping out whole villages. Today there are nearly 4,000 treaty Shuswap and an unknown number who are non-treaty.

The region occupied by the Shuswap is primarily a plateau at elevations of between 2,500 and 6,000 feet above sea level. In places, rivers have cut deeply into the land; elsewhere such as in the north, the rivers flow in comparatively broad valleys which lie from 50 to 500 feet below the general level of the countryside. In the east there is the Rocky Mountain Trench, a great valley with rugged mountainous terrain on either side with some peaks that exceed 10,000 feet in elevation. Shuswap country experiences extremes of climate especially if different elevations are compared. It is moderately dry with an annual precipitation somewhat in excess of 20 inches. Winters are cold with an average temperature of 12 degrees; snowfall occurs and accumulates. Summer temperatures are in the 60s.

The area is forested with cedar, hemlock, pine, spruce and fir except at extreme elevations. In general, the trees are smaller than on the North Pacific Coast and the forests less luxuriant. A variety of animals, many formerly important to the Shuswap, inhabit the area: mule and black-tailed deer, moose, caribou, mountain sheep and goat, both black and grizzly bear, ermine, marten, wolverine, otter, fox, wolf, cougar, lynx and





*Winter house
with log ladder*

bobcat, woodchuck and marmot, chipmunk, squirrels, beaver, muskrat, snowshoe hare and porcupine. Of birds, the following occur: loon, grebe, bittern, Canada goose, ducks of many species, hawks, bald eagle, osprey, several species of grouse, ptarmigan, shore birds, kingfisher, woodpeckers, owls and a variety of song birds. Fish inhabited the lakes and rivers, the most important being Pacific salmon and trout.

The Shuswap lived by hunting and fishing, not agriculture. Such an economy necessitated their moving according to the seasons and location of wild game, following a well-defined yearly cycle.

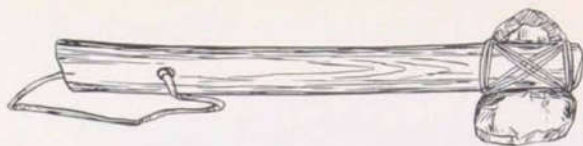
During the winter, each band of Shuswap lived within a definite locale, each member family residing at or within a few miles of a village, the focal point of the band, and near water. In December, the people entered their winter homes, dwellings they would not leave again until April. Winter houses were sunk two to three feet below ground level for warmth and security against inclement weather. Over the excavation a conical framework of poles was erected and covered with grass, cedar bark, and earth. The apex was left open for the escape of the smoke from a fire below and as an entrance to the lodge. One descended to the floor by a ladder, placed in the smoke hole and leaning against the northeast or northwest corner of the square roof opening. Cellars were sometimes dug in the side of the excavation. For removing snow there were wooden shovels.

Household furnishings were not extensive. For bedding

the Shuswap used sleeping mats of deer, sheep, goat, and bear skins. The women wove round baskets in which to boil food. Basketry made in the coil technique of spruce or cedar roots was an important industry. In addition, birch-bark baskets were made in various shapes. In general, they were constructed with square corners rather than being round. The parts were sewn together with split spruce roots and the rims covered with stitching of the same material. Ornamentation consisted of dyed or undyed split goose and swan quills or bark of the bird-cherry. Temporary baskets, barrel or funnel shaped, might be made of balsam, poplar, or spruce bark. The women cooked berries and soaked skins in these. Some were used to melt snow in.

The Shuswap had containers of hide, with or without the hair left attached, and netted bags. In the former category were caribou leg-skin bags so typical of Sub-arctic peoples. Such bags were used to transport goods and to store clothing. In mountain goat skin bags, the women stored meat and fat. Spoons were made of mountain sheep horn and small ones of mountain goat horn; cups were made of birch-bark.

Winter was a time of relaxation and then there would be games and sports, although these were also played at other times. Wrestling, foot-races, ring and dart, dice, cup and ball, lacrosse, and cats-cradle were some of the games. Often gambling was an integral part. Winter was also a time when the skins of animals killed in the fall were prepared by the women for use as clothing. The women



Wood-working tool

used semi-lunar knives to cut the hides when making clothing. Some hides they prepared as 'buckskin', first removing the hair, then rubbing into the hide the brains of large game animals and later smoking the hides.

When the Shuswap had occasion to move about the country during the winter, they travelled on snowshoes and for warmth wore robes of marmot, rabbit, beaver, lynx, or muskrat skins or two large deer skins sewn together. Besides robes, they had fur caps, skin head bands and mittens secured with a cord passing across the nape of the neck. Socks of skin over which they placed moccasins of deer, caribou, elk, or moose hide were worn. Sometimes the moccasins were attached to leggings of sheep or deer skin. The poor people wore sandals or moccasins of sturgeon skin.

Skin clothing was decorated by dyeing or with dentalium shell, elk teeth, or eagle tail feathers. Originally, they did quill embroidery but after the traders arrived the Shuswap adopted beads.

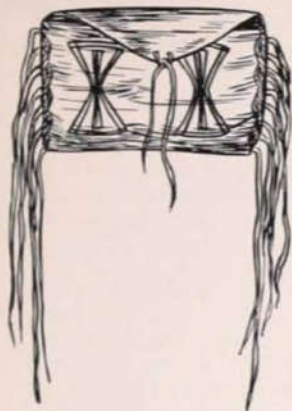
Subsistence activities during the winter were not extensive. The people depended primarily on food dried during the fall. Some fishing through holes in the ice was undertaken. The fishermen used either a hook and bait or sometimes a decoy and spear. To chop a hole in the ice, a chisel tipped with antler was used and to remove the broken ice, a scoop.

In April the people moved out of their semi-subterranean winter houses. For the rest of the month and during May, they searched for edible roots which they dug with digging sticks. As June approached, the people moved to the shores of lakes where trout fishing was productive. Trout were speared at night by torch light from canoes and rafts or caught with gang hooks. Sometimes a net was dragged between two canoes. Also at this time of year, large gill-nets were used. Besides these techniques a variety of basket fish traps existed.

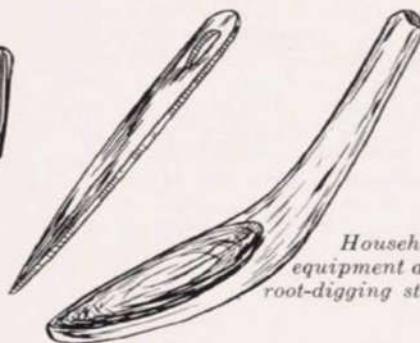
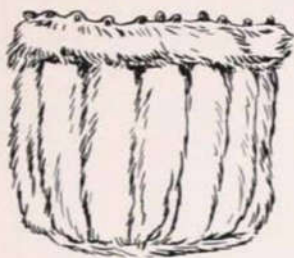
The gatherings at trout fisheries were not only to fish but to exchange goods. The Shuswap engaged in considerable trade throughout the area. At Green Lake, for example, great numbers of individuals from all divisions gathered for sports, to catch trout, and especially to trade. The goods exchanged consisted of dried trout and salmon, netted carrying bags, cedar roots, marmot skins, baskets, salmon oil, shells, and hazel nuts. The scalps of red headed woodpeckers were of extreme value and worth as much as three beaver pelts.

The Canyon division of the Shuswap, who controlled part of the salmon supply and prepared oil and dried salmon for trade, acted as middle men with the Chilcotin. From the Chilcotin they obtained dentalium shells, woven goat hair blankets and belts, bales of dressed marten skins, rabbitskin robes, and a few snowshoes. In





*Skin and bark
containers*



*Household
equipment and
root-digging stick*



exchange, the Shuswap gave not only dried salmon and salmon oil, but also woven baskets and paint. By this exchange, articles from the North Pacific Coast Indians reached the Shuswap passing via the Chilcotin and Lillooet. Through such trading some Shuswap made a profit enabling them to curtail hunting and trapping and to give frequent potlatches.

Summer was a time for religious festivals and dances. They might also be held in winter. The songs sung at the dances had been obtained from the spirit world and the ceremonies held to bring the souls of the dead back to life and initiate a time of abundance and ease. The ceremonies helped the souls of the dead reach the spirit world and forged a bond between the living and the dead. Shamanism was an important part of Shuswap religion and special prophets arose. Youths sought the protection of guardian spirits.

For summer travel, the Shuswap made canoes of spruce or white pine bark, although cottonwood logs were on occasion roughly prepared as dugouts. The bark canoe was the 'sturgeon nose' type, the keel extending beyond the gunwales both fore and aft. The bark was turned inside out and sewn with split willow withes and tops of hemp or sometimes with split roots of spruce or pine. The canoes were propelled with paddles of several styles and kept free of water with bark bailers. For overland travel, a tumpline of buckskin was used to support netted carrying bags of babiche or else large bags of caribou leg-skins. About 1780 the Shuswap acquired horses making transportation easier. Besides being ridden and used as pack animals, horses were used for food until about 1850.

In late summer, the salmon began to arrive in the country of the Shuswap and the people then moved to favoured fishing locales. Here the salmon were caught with bag-nets, weirs, dip-nets and spears.

After the fall salmon fishing, the people cached the dried fish and left the rivers to pursue the fall hunt. To secure deer and mountain sheep, men drove the animals to the top of a hill and here surrounded them. A common hunting technique for deer was to erect fences in which snares were fixed. Another method used during the fall migration of deer was to plant three spears in the ground

in a deer trail on one side of a stream over which the animal would have to jump. It impaled itself on the spears when it landed on the other side.

The chute and pound was also a common device used to secure deer. The Shuswap built these on the shores of small lakes where the deer crossed during their fall treks. The chute was a rough fence extending to the water's edge. The pound was located in the water with the poles set close together. A gate was placed in the pound to allow the entrance of canoes once the deer were inside. Then with a hooked stick, the hunter caught the antlers or neck of an animal and pushed its head under water until it drowned. Pounds were also erected at those spots along the shore where the deer left the water.

Other hunting techniques and devices were in use. Deer and bear were caught in tossing pole snares. Hunters also built deadfalls for the latter animal. Eagles were caught in baited pits. Marmots, rabbits, grouse, fox, lynx, coyote, and wolf were snared or the latter three taken in deadfalls. The Shuswap used a bow and arrow for moose, caribou, deer, and mountain sheep. Caribou, elk, and deer were run with dogs. Beaver were killed with spears having detachable points and caught in wide-mesh nets. One type of net used in winter consisted of a bag-net set under the ice in spots to which the beaver swam when its house was disturbed.

No longer do the Shuswap engage in these activities. They, like the other Indians of Canada, have been forced to abandon the ways of their ancestors and attempt to find their way in Euro-Canadian society. In the case of the Shuswap this has been through ranching, farming, and lumbering. ♦

NORTHERN BOOKS

M.E. A PORTRAYAL OF EMILY CARR

By Edythe Hembroff-Schleicher.
Clarke, Irwin, Toronto, 1969.
123 pages. \$4.95.

Reviewed by Flora Hamilton Burns

Glancing at the *Victoria Times* of 12 May 1930, Emily Carr was arrested by a headline: 'Artist Returns from Europe' above a very attractive photograph of 'Miss Edythe Hembroff . . . who returned yesterday from Europe where she has been pursuing her art studies for the last two years. Miss Hembroff spent a year in Paris as a pupil of M. Lhote, one of the foremost teachers of oil painting in France . . . and has the distinction of having one of her paintings hung in the Annual Exhibition of L'Art Francoise Independent, Paris, at which only professional artists are invited to exhibit.'

Greatly excited, Emily telephoned Edythe and discovered that her studies closely paralleled her own: both had spent four years at the San Francisco Institute of Art, had studied at Academie Colarossi, La Grande Chaumière, nursery of most of the great Impressionists, and had had their paintings hung in *avant garde* exhibitions in Paris. Their mutual experiences and aims led to a close and stimulating friendship at a turning point in Emily's life.

M.E. is the delightful, straightforward, candid and amusing account of the intimate camaraderie which blossomed and expanded between Emily Carr and Edythe during the climactic years, 1930-33, when Emily was moving away from her preoccupation with Indian art and symbolism and emerging into the joyful, free interpretation of pure landscape.

Its simplicity of style and freedom from 'art jargon', which Emily so violently disliked, will appeal to a wide public. These refreshing reminiscences explain Emily's use of varying signatures, throw new light on her methods of painting and describe the humorous adventures of camping with Emily Carr. Written by a fellow artist who had travelled the same road, *M.E.* is an important addition to the saga of Emily Carr, and covers years not recorded in her Journals.

In addition *M.E.* includes twenty-one letters from Emily, dating from October 1933 to February 1940. They are treasure trove, vintage Emily Carr, and need to be read and savoured to the full. They fill many gaps in her Journals and bring the reader straight into the presence of Emily Carr—her enthusiasms, her loneliness, her slow and courageous recovery from her serious heart attack in 1937, and her utter astonishment at the increasing demand for her paintings.

Signed 'M.E.', these letters are indelibly stamped by her personality, bring her as close and vivid as life, and are in their very essence a 'Portrayal of Emily Carr'.

Freelance writer and historian, Miss Burns was a close friend of Emily Carr.

OPEN HORIZONS

By Sigurd F. Olson. Knopf, New York, 1969. 231 pages, illus. \$5.95.

Reviewed by Chris Vickers

Sigurd Olson has become a legendary figure in his own lifetime. No other man that I know of understands the North American wilderness better. No other writer has described its beauty and wildness in finer prose, or has made stronger pleas for its protection. Standing on a rocky promontory of the Canadian Shield, with lakes and winding rivers everywhere around, he could say with Meredith:

Lovely are the curves of the white owl sweeping
Wavy in the dusk lit by one large star.

This book is in some degree autobiographical. Olson traces in successive chapters his life as a boy on a bush farm in northern Wisconsin. You follow his career at college and as a teacher, his service as a guide;

travels that took him into most of the wilderness areas of North America, both north and south. And there is an interesting chapter on how he mastered the art of writing; that he succeeded is clearly indicated in this and earlier volumes.

Here too the reader will find a healthy philosophy in a troubled world: 'Life itself is a series of open horizons, with one no sooner completed than another looms ahead. Some are traversed swiftly while others extend so far into the future one cannot predict their end. Penetrations into the unknown, they all give meaning to what has gone before and courage for what is to come.' Mr. Olson knows the spiritual value of Thoreau's 'wildness', a wilderness that man in all too short a time may destroy.

In the final chapters of *Open Horizons* the author urges strongly the preservation of the wilderness as it is. Man-managed tourist areas would disturb the ecological balance of the wilderness and remove some of the 'Joys' that 'come from simple and natural things. . .'. His final statement on the subject leaves little doubt about the author's position: 'The ancient biological stability would be destroyed in favor of a tame, man-made substitute.'

Mr Olson is an intelligent man, he knows how difficult it is to battle advancing technology and he would not want to stop the many comforts it has brought to mankind. Yet I detect a deep note of sadness when he describes the purr of the mining drills in his beloved Superior Park. Is all this, he queries, 'the beginning of a new era, a bonanza, perhaps, or a requiem for the Spirit Land of the Chippewa?'

A LONDONER IN RUPERT'S LAND

Thomas Bunn of the Hudson's Bay Company

By Denis Bayley, Moore & Tellyer, Chichester, England; Peguis Publishers, Winnipeg, 1969. 100 pages, illus., index. \$9.00

Reviewed by Ross Mitchell

This book owes its being to the preservation of a correspondence of fifty years between Thomas Bunn and

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TREASURES

two sisters, Nancy and Fanny Bayley. The latter was the great-grandmother of the author, the former was buried in the same grave as Thomas's first wife Jane. After Jane's death Thomas entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company and in 1797 came to Fort Albany on James Bay. He never recrossed the Atlantic. When he left the service in 1822 he moved to the Red River Settlement, where he died in 1853.

It is the story of a man distinguished by his steadfast and affectionate character. He was a born letter writer and early days in the fur trade and the Red River Colony come alive in his letters, supplemented by records in the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company, which tell of his stay at Albany, Brandon House on the Assiniboine, York Factory, and Rock Depot on the Hayes river. He was not too successful as an Indian trader but was a good district manager. At Rock Depot he met such interesting travellers as John Franklin on his second arctic expedition and his second in command Dr John Richardson; Nicholas Garry, the deputy governor of the Hudson's Bay Company; Peter Rindisbacher, the young Swiss artist. At the Red River he met Peter Warren Dease who with Thomas Simpson traced out part of the Arctic shore line, and Dr John Rae who completed the survey and later established the fate of Franklin.

Thomas Bunn had much to do with surgeons. At Albany the officer in

ESKIMO ART

This popular presentation of many aspects of Eskimo carving, old and recent, pottery, painting, masks, with a selected bibliography, which was a special issue of *The Beaver* in 1967, has now been reprinted. 100 pages of text and pictures.

\$1.50 from

The Beaver, Hudson's Bay House
Winnipeg 1, Manitoba

charge was John McNab, a surgeon of Edinburgh, whose daughter, Sarah, he married. By her he became the father of John Bunn who, after two stays in Edinburgh, returned and was the first native born doctor in the Red River. John married the daughter of Thomas Thomas, another surgeon, who was a governor of Rupert's Land. Dr John Richardson, author of two volumes on the fauna and flora of northern America, was an acquaintance. Later Bunn met Dr John Rae who named an inlet on the Arctic coast after him.

The letters tell of Bunn's fortunes in the new land, his days as a 'writer' (clerk) in the Hudson's Bay service, and of his holdings on the Red River.

After the death of Sarah McNab, Thomas married Phoebe, daughter of William Sinclair and Nahoway, an Indian woman. In 1820 the first Anglican chaplain to the Red River, Rev. John West, performed the

marriage ceremony at Rock Depot and baptized their children. In Thomas's later years at the Red River Settlement his doctor son, John, then a widower with three sons, lived with Thomas and Phoebe.

Denis Bayley has produced a readable book remarkable for its accuracy and careful research, thanks to the exactness of the Hudson's Bay Company's archives and to the skill of the letter writer. It should attract the attention of those interested in the early history of Rupert's Land, where the integrity of the old Hudson's Bay Company's officers must have been a force in preserving a British possession.

The book is highly commended.

Dr Ross Mitchell, physician and former president of the Manitoba Historical Society, has written a number of articles on the medical history of the West.

THE LONG HUNT

By Fred Bruemmer. Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1969. 152 pages, illus. \$12.50.

This story is well told, without affectation or condescension. A skilful photographer and careful writer, Mr Bruemmer is a modest man with a knack of adapting to the people among whom he finds himself—and his travels have been wide.

He is among those who become captivated by the North, having once set out to photograph the people of the arctic lands, and over the years he has lived and travelled with them on their own terms.

Here he tells of his friends at Grise Fiord on Ellesmere Island with whom he went on a short walrus hunt and a long polar bear hunt. The long trip took them across Jones Sound and Devon Island to Beechey Island and the detailed description enables the reader to participate in the chill of the blended day and night, the excitement of the chase, the tribulations of travel by dogteam, the care with which Eskimos look after the Kabloona, the pleasing taste of raw fresh meat.

This is not a book on what to do about the Eskimos, it is the recounting of personal experience and is recommended to those who would gain some of the feeling of a way of life rapidly vanishing.

The design of the book is unattractive and does not do full justice to Mr Bruemmer's superb photographs, the quality of which is familiar to readers of this magazine.

—M.B.

FUR TRADE CONFERENCE 1970

A conference on the fur trade will be held October 1st to 3rd, 1970 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, under the sponsorship of the Universities of Manitoba and Winnipeg, the Manitoba Centennial Corporation, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the Manitoba Historical Society, the Manitoba Archaeological Society, the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, and the Hudson's Bay Company.

The three-day conference will present a varied program, with broad appeal, featuring speakers from Canada, the United States, and Great Britain. Although primarily historical in focus, papers on related archaeological investigations as well as on modern aspects of the fur trade will also be presented for the pleasure of the layman as much as the professional.

A brochure giving more detailed information on the conference is available by writing to: Fur Trade Conference 1970, c/o Hudson's Bay Company, Hudson's Bay House, 79 Main Street, Winnipeg 1, Canada.

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